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# THE INVESTIGATOR!

"LET BUT THE SEARCH GO FREELY ON, AND THE RIGHT MEASURE OF EVERY THING  
MUST SOON BE FOUND."—SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

L O N D O N :

HETHERINGTON, 40, HOLYWELL-STREET, STRAND.



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## PREFACE.

THIS volume of the "INVESTIGATOR" may not be followed by another, and therefore, in submitting it to the public, I shall avail myself of the opportunity a Preface affords, to enlarge upon topics of a public, as well as personal, interest.

Upon the principle that a commodity is worth just as much as it will fetch, I conclude that the INVESTIGATOR is not worth much, for it has fetched little—but, with scrupulous regard to truth, I can add, that the support it has received, though insufficient, is greater than I expected.

Should I never again take pen in hand, the knowledge that I have, through the instrumentality of this and other periodicals, excited thought, and aided, to some extent, in diffusing among the humbler classes of society, sound information with regard to the nature and influence of religion, will be to me never failing source of satisfaction.

There cannot be any useful organic change in the constitution of human society, so long as the humbler members of it remain in bondage to religion. Any reform to be effectual and radical, must begin with the many, not the few. Where the many are enlightened, the few can scarcely fail to be or to become so—but in countries where the many are ignorant and prejudiced, the aristocratic few are constantly tempted to strengthen their own authority at the public expence, and make their exclusive knowledge an instrument of the most galling oppression. No tyranny can be more monstrous than that endured by religion-struck multitudes, who are cursed by an *educated* aristocracy. Where knowledge is generally diffused, an aristocracy may be defied to do much mischief—but where no other class has knowledge, or dare publish it if they have, the effects are horrible in the extreme. Nor do we find that the few desire to part with the influence which the exclusive possession of knowledge gives them. Quite the contrary. We almost invariably find them resolute opponents of any attempts to raise up plebeians to their intellectual level. Swinish multitudes they conceive are never so contented, or so easily governed, as when swinish in intellect. Hence the pains rich tyrants of all countries take to teach their poor slaves "true religion." Hence their anxiety to preserve intact a traditional veneration for theistic follies. Hence the unscrupulous measures they take to extirpate infidels, and keep atheism beyond the range of popular vision. Hence their avarice, pride, frauds, hypocrisy, and scandalous injustice. Hence the swarms of priests hired to befool us into belief that a mass of wild tales, ridiculous promises, absurd denunciations, and contradictory doctrines is a "divine system," a religion of love and liberty.

A really free press cannot long co-exist with a spurious religion—it is manifestly therefore the interest of traffickers in such religion to throw obstructions in the way of intellectual progress, and, above all, to buy up or silence the press. Give, said the eloquent Sheridan, to ministers a corrupt House of Commons—give them a pliant and a servile House of Lords—give them the keys of the treasury, and all the patronage of the crown—and give me the *liberty of the press*, and with this mighty engine I will overthrow the fabric of corruption, and establish upon its ruins the rights and privileges of the people.

To stop whirlwinds with a feather, or ocean tides with a bullrush, would be as easy as to preserve any religious system, one score years after none shall fear to attack, or profit by defending it.

An able writer of the last century\* well observed, that "All the power and policy of men cannot continue a *system* long, be it civil or religious, after its truth has ceased to be acknowledged—or an *establishment* long after it has ceased to be acknowledged. It must be allowed that theirs is an *empire of opinions* only—take away that, the whole will vanish, like the baseless fabric of a vision, and leave not a wreck behind."

The INVESTIGATOR's great merit consists in vigorously helping to disorganise the empire of old opinions, and organise the empire of new opinions. Except the "Oracle of Reason," no periodical has been published in England, during the last ten years, so well calculated to bring religion into contempt. This, I repeat, is the great merit of the volume here submitted to the public, and if it have no other, *that* should secure it a place in the esteem of rationalists. It cannot be expected that such a book will be generally approved, or even read by people so fanatical, and thoroughly priest-gulled as the people of England, who are not *much* improved since Edmund Burke wrote, who complacently assured the infidels of his day, that "There is no rust of superstition, with which the accumulated absurdity of the human mind might have crusted it over in the course of ages, the majority of the people of England would not prefer to impiety."

A people who prefer a pious villain to an honest atheist, the fanatical Thuggee, who expects to please God, by the wholesale murder of infidels—to the enlightened and philanthropic rejector of all creeds, must have reached the lowest depths of mental degradation—and yet, if Burke did not slander the English, they *were* sunk thus disgracefully low. That an overwhelming majority of them are so at this moment, I do not hesitate to assert. Why Paley, the celebrated, that "most famous of natural theologians," has, in his posthumous works avowed, that *indifference* in matters of religion is a crime of deepest dye—a crime so abominable, that he who commits it, is *more dangerous to society*, and more offensive to God, than the *bloodiest believer who ever offered up his own offspring upon the altar of superstition*. A writer of our own day, Mr. Origen Bachele, deals with rejectors of "revelation" in a spirit no less christian than did Paley with those who are indifferent about it—telling us,\* "The crudest creed of the wildest horde that roams the desert, is not a hundredth part so injurious to the interests of mankind, as is the sceptic's rejection of revelation." When such savagely bigotted sentiments as these are paraded by christianity's most liberal, as well as able, defenders, what but theoretic folly, and vindictively intolerant practice, can be looked for in the illiterate mass of its believers.

Who, in his "right mind," can expect the dupes of such real or pretended bigots to think soundly, or to read with any other emotions than those of horror, works like the INVESTIGATOR? If proof were needed of the excessive fatuity that still prevails in England with regard to religion, it may be found in newspaper reports of the baptist jubilee, held lately, in Northumberland. Among the other tricks there played off by those who scruple not to act the rogue as well as fool, "for Christ's sake," was the getting up of a "bazaar sale"—at which, with other spiritually valuable wares, extensively sold, was a promissory note, in the following form:

"No. 1. Old Bank of Heaven. I promise to you HOLY *Eternal Life*, and none shall pluck you out of BIBLE. my hands."

"A good title Ten Thousand. Believe on the Lord to heaven is Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved—worth more Whoso believeth shall be saved—whoso than £10,000. believeth not shall be damned."

The purchasers of these promissory notes, payable at the Bank of Heaven, are none of my acquaintance—but I will venture to affirm that they are neither atheists—nor rejectors of revelation—nor indifferent about true religion—nor readers of the INVESTIGATOR. By constitution they are, without doubt, "religious animals," and, though a *little* fanatical, unquestionably, if Burke, Paley, Bachele, and other

\* See Six Letters on Intolerance, published in 1791.

\* See Discussion between Robert Dale Owen, and Origen Bachele, page 49.



liberal infidelity-haters may be relied on, more useful as citizens—more amiable as men—and more acceptable to God, than our Spinozas, Shelleys, Benthams, and Owens.

Just in the same proportion that impiety has gathered strength, piety has shrunk from the perpetration of its many-hued villanies. To impiety the human race owes almost every fraction of its liberties—and but for the *impious* Europe would once more be the seat of religious despotism—her kings and princes, as in days of yore, trembling at the nod of peddling priests.

Some few persons imagine that *my* opinions with regard to religion are not now what they were when I edited the Oracle of Reason—but such persons are mistaken, as this volume proves, for the INVESTIGATOR has enforced the same truths, and enunciated the same principles as the Oracle of Reason, only in a *manner* somewhat different. My reasons for refusing, after my imprisonment in Bristol, to resume the editorship of the Oracle of Reason, were many and cogent—but no useful public end would be achieved by publishing them.

For more than four years, my opinions as regards religion have been unwavering, “without change or shadow of turning.” When a mere child, I rejected all doctrinal religion, and laughed at its expounders. I nevertheless believed, or thought I believed, in a God. Charmed by the eloquent verbiage of Rosseau, and other theistical writers of the sentimental school, I fancied that God might be *felt*, though not *understood*, to exist. Five years ago, I delivered a course of three lectures, on the life, character, and writings of that “self-torturing sophist,” and well remember talking most exquisite nonsense about the God I *felt* existed, the heart being sometimes a better guide than the head, etc. But in less than a month after the delivery of those lectures, I bade adieu to sentimental theism, and from that hour to this have neither vacillated in opinion or action.

The paltry attempts made by authority to stop the publication of the Oracle of Reason, signally failed, and *that*, I presume, is the reason why no prosecutions have been instituted against the INVESTIGATOR. Many articles in this volume contain atheism as plain and rank as ever flowed from human lips or pen. Yet twenty-eight numbers have passed unnoticed by our christian authorities. Priests’ horror of free discussion is only equalled by their hatred, which they so uniformly display, that one is almost tempted to include detestation of heterodox sincerity among the *instincts* of christian natures. The preachers of that name rarely, if ever, care one doit for the liberties of others, if they can but secure their own. Freedom is on their lips, while intolerance plays about their hearts. Like their prototypes of old, “their feet are swift to shed blood”—the pharisee of the *nineteenth* is, in sober truth, the very same religious animal as the pharisee of the *first*, century. Priests of all religions are the same, was the assertion of an author who knew them well—and, for my own part, I think they ever will be so. They are placed in a false position, and necessarily play a false part. Many priests mean well, but in their capacity of priests, it is impossible to act otherwise than ill. They are necessarily liars, when they pretend to *explain* the will of a God or Gods, and universal economy—for no one ever did know one iota about universal economy, the wills of Gods, or Gods themselves. All preaching upon such subjects is therefore sincere nonsense, or rank deception. That priests are, and have been, what I here pronounce them, is amply testified by the horrid deeds they are known to have either caused or sanctioned. According to calculations, whose correctness is admitted by christians themselves, more than 200,000 heretics suffered death in seven years, during the sway of Pope Julian. No fewer than 100,000 were massacred by French catholics, in the course of three months. Waldenses, who perished through priestly instrumentality, amounted to 1,000,000. Within thirty years, the jesuits destroyed 900,000. Under the Duke of Alva, 30,000 were executed by the hangman. 159,000 fell during the Irish massacre, besides vast multitudes of whom history makes no mention, and about whom the world could never be particularly informed, who were chained to the galleys for life, proscribed, starved, burnt, assassinated, immured within the walls of the bastille, and other state prisons.

Thanks to the general diffusion of *impious* knowledge, the luxury of butchering heretics by wholesale is no longer permitted, either to orthodox catholics, or orthodox protestants. The time has past when on the lips of christianity’s chief-priest hang the lives of millions—and fierce dukes, like he of Alva, could hang his scores of thousands.

Religious influence is on the wane, and for *that very reason* its monsters dare not renew those scenes of strife and blood, in which many of them would right willingly become chief actors. Atheism, on the other hand, is making rapid way through all classes of society, humanising, as well as enlightening, them in its progress. The result may be easily foreseen.

The spirit of this age is a spirit of progress. Now, all religions are, *by nature*, anti-progressive, and cannot be made otherwise by art. They stand directly in the way of moral improvement, and pushed aside or annihilated, they *must* be, ere society can advance on that glorious career, the wisely-good pant to see it run. Humanity’s goal is peace, freedom, and happiness, for all, based on the intelligence of all. Let none despair of seeing it achieved. The reign of religion is fast drawing to a close. All the true churches of Christ are at loggerheads—and by their valorous battlings doing more to bring religion into contempt than its bitterest foes. The Scotch true church has, “by the grace of God,” exhibited to popular gaze the instructively-ludicrous spectacle of a church divided against itself—and the best of the joke is, that one half of this *true church* being mortally affronted with the other half, threatens to extinguish it. In England, clerical affairs seem in no better plight. The puseyites are hourly expected to secede from the true church of England, and open a rival “shop.” Mr. Gladstone, her majesty’s president of the board of trade, is exerting himself in the pious work of convincing the puseyites that they ought not to leave the true church, because if they only stop in, and have patience, he assures them they may make that church just what they wish it to be. Whether the puseyites will take this advice remains to be seen.

“More power” to these “universal schismatics,” who are so industriously paving the way for a speedy and entire overthrow of religion. Verily they are religion’s most formidable enemies, while professedly its most enthusiastic friends. Were I asked who, in Scotland, are the most usefully potent friends of atheism, my answer would be, Drs. Chalmers and Candlish. Were I asked who, in England, bear away the palm, as regards that peculiar species of useful potency, without a moment’s hesitation I should answer, Drs. Pusey and Newman. The splendid couple of doctors before mentioned, have *actually* shaken the Scotch establishment to its centre, and *threaten*, in the pure spirit of a Knox, to utterly demolish it. If this be not doing the work of “thorough-going infidelity,” I don’t know what is. To sweep away, or split up, true church after true church, is a capital method of reforming the world. The fewer churches we have, and the weaker those few are we cannot get rid of, the better for society. Our protestant establishment, with its calvanistic articles, arminian clergy, and popish liturgy, might have stood for ages, if only attacked from without—but the discordant elements which have long been pent up within will ensure its destruction.

Should I again take the field, it will be to renew the war *for* morality and *against* religion—to pronounce with greater emphasis than ever my contempt for religious principle, and hearty detestation of religious practice. Believing at least nine-tenths of human evils have sprung from religion, all my energies shall be devoted to the task of exposing its false, corrupt, and odious nature. Convinced that it is morality’s mortal enemy—convinced that no religious people ever can be mentally free, or morally pure—convinced that materialism is the only rational philosophy, and atheism the only common-sense creed—convinced, moreover, that European governments can no longer stifle, or even check, discussion, I promise the friends of progress to take full advantage of a position so cheering, and never cease to combat error, whatever the form it may assume, the interests it involves, or the authorities adduced in its support.

THE EDITOR.

Edinburgh, 1843.

# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

NUMBER 1.

WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE principle of investigation is lauded by thinkers of all parties and all shades of opinion. They agree that the principle is excellent, only differing as to its application. In this particular, the question of free investigation is somewhat analogous to that of free trade. The principle of free trade is allowed to be perfectly sound even by ultra-tories. Anti-free-traders are sufficiently numerous, but avowed opponents of free trade principles are scarce—so scarce that I verily believe it would pay, though rather a hazardous affair, to cage a few, and carry them through the country as rare curiosities. Avowed anti-free-investigators would, I fancy, in any respectable company, be looked upon with no less curiosity and astonishment than anti-free-traders. Peel, it is well known, is a free-trader in *principle*—his difference with Russell, Cobden, and Roebuck being merely as to its *application*. In truth, it is really pleasant to find tory, whig, anti-bread taxer, and radical, in principle so harmonic, yet in practice so discordant.

Not less pleasant is the harmony that prevails as to the principle of investigation, while the discordance among free investigators is no less complete than among free-traders. The papist agrees with the protestant, the protestant with the dissenter, the dissenter with almost everybody else, as to the immense utility of investigation. Here orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and no doxy at all, meet upon one common ground, admitting the soundness of one common principle.

It frequently happens, however, that true principles are either falsely applied, or not applied at all; which I take to be the case with the much praised, yet badly understood principle of free investigation. The cause of this seems to be, that few men *care*, and much fewer *dare*, to act consistently upon those principles they well know to be true and useful. "We want strength to act up to our reason," said Rochefoucault, and the saying is true, if ever saying was—it is as true, that men in general are vicious, no less than weak, not only failing to act up to their own reason, which is *weakness*, but when armed with power, take very stringent measures to prevent others less weak or inconsistent than themselves acting up to their reason, or even making the attempt—which is *vice* most odious. How wickedly inconsistent, how basely weak, are those christians, who shrink from proving *many* things, in the very teeth of their own oft repeated declaration, that it is the duty of a rational creature to "prove *all* things." History vouches for the fact, that no body, no section of christians, ever themselves acted, or suffered others to act in the spirit of that express injunction—an injunction, be it carefully remembered, which is believed by them to have fallen from the lips of Christ himself. To *prove*, in this textual sense, is the same as to *investigate*. Now it is not matter of *opinion*, but matter of *fact*, that free investigation, of *all* things, has been strictly prohibited in every nation of Europe, since the advent of christianity.

The first christians were by turns persecutors and persecuted—their "inflexible intolerance" is set down by Gibbon as one of the most efficient secondary causes of the subsequent

establishment of their religion. If they did not always bite, they never failed to show their teeth, and doubtless would invariably have used them had they dared. It is related by the great Roman historian, that even *before* the establishment of christianity as the world's religion, if a christian conversed with a pagan, and the latter happened to ejaculate, "Jupiter bless me," the christian at once stopped the conversation. *to protest against the divinity of Jupiter*. There never was, perhaps, a greater foe to human improvement than popery. Indeed, state christianity, as every other legalised religion hitherto known in the world, has been fruitful of direst mischiefs. No state religion could long subsist without a well-trained band of hireling priests—men hired to suppress, if they cannot prevent the growth of, truth—hired to perpetuate ignorance and falsehood. In those ages, emphatically called *the dark*, popery sat like some horrible night-mare upon the dormant energies of prostrate humanity. Papists, so happily styled by Milton, "particular catholics, and universal Schismatics," have ever been, and 'tis more than probable, ever will be, the bitter enemies of free investigation. As soon should I expect to see the starved hyena docile as the lamb, as the popish serf, a firm, faithful friend of reason and liberty. The leopard *might* change his spots, the papist *might* change his nature—but let those who are wise reckon upon neither of these results. Let them not count upon the love of truth, the generosity, or justice, of any man, be he Jew or gentile, be he papist, lutheran, calvinist, wesleyan, mormonite, or any other kind of christian, who is the *open* or *covert* opponent of free investigation.

From the times of Constantine, down to these, rather more tolerant, of our gracious Queen Victoria, the principle of investigation has been extolled, while every attempt to investigate out of the prescribed beaten track, has been uniformly checked—proving *all* things insisted upon as a christian duty—yet the effort to prove any thing incompatible with systems, religious or political, punished as a flagrant crime. Brunano proved more things than nicely squared with the interests of priests, so priests destroyed him. He investigated too freely, and paid with life the penalty of his rashness. Calvin asserted his own right to investigate *ad libitum* questions the most sacred, yet did he cruelly, illegally, and sneakingly, cause his friend Servetus to be burnt. No doubt he considered Servetus far too free an investigator. Vanini was brought to the stake by christians, but then he attempted to prove that *there was no supernatural Being*. To burn such an investigator, they thought must be right. Byron wrote:

Christians have burned each other, quite persuaded,  
All the apostles would have done as they did.

After burning each other, no one can feel surprised that they should burn avowed atheists, such as Brunano and Vanini. Those who scruple not to destroy their *friends*, may reasonably be expected to make short work with their *enemies*.

I have already remarked *en passant*, that we live in times *rather* more tolerant than those of Constantine—yet it is far from safe, even in this "enlightened age," to investigate *very* freely, or publish *very* heterodox opinions. It is not safe, for example, to publish atheistical opinions, though thousands



deem them sound. Nevertheless, *some* progress has been made by the people at large, both as respects right feeling and useful knowledge. Less than a century ago, it was dangerous to be known as a unitarian—now unitarianism is the avowed creed of a numerous and enlightened section of society. Ser-vetus suffered the most agonizing of deaths for saying more fashionable heterodoxy than is every Sunday publicly preached in our unitarian and other dissenting chapels. This seems to prove that the principle of free investigation, like the principle of free trade, may, with perfect safety, be much more widely applied now than in the "good old times." Nay, so far have we advanced on the right road, that even deism has ceased to alarm the pious, or attract the notice of her majesty's attorney-general. Deism is now considered a decent sort of creed, and its professors by no means disreputable characters. By some philosophers, deists are viewed as "lights of other days," men entertaining a class of opinions, which even religionists begin to discover they were more frightened than hurt by. Paine was a deist, yet the thorough-going philosophers here alluded to, pronounced Paine "a superstitions as an old washerwoman." Those who know how superstitions old washerwomen are, are, I conceive, the only fit persons to judge as to the value of this opinion.

It is certain that deism is fast losing all traces of disreputability, and that the only opinions our authorities tell us *must* be suppressed—*must* be put down—are the atheistical. Anything short of atheism, or absolute non-belief in anything supernatural, may now be spoken or printed with impunity. Republicanism is much dreaded, but by no means so much dreaded by our statesmen, as is atheism by our priests. A political writer may avow the most extreme opinions on matters of general government, and yet easily so manage as to escape the meshes of the law; a task, the writer against religious principle does not find practicable. Many of our most popular writers have avowed themselves republicans, yet no prosecutions were instituted against them; but in no instance has an individual declared himself atheist—in other words, denied there is sufficient reason to believe in the existence of one or more supernatural beings—and escaped the jaws of a prison. Atheistical opinions are generally considered altogether incompatible, not merely with good government, but with any government—good, bad, or indifferent. Atheism is held in utter abhorrence, as opinions resulting from pushing our investigations beyond all reasonable limits. Even many avowed deists, who openly attack all the religions of the world, are nevertheless convinced that atheism is intolerable, and not to be tolerated. This class of investigators are of opinion all questions, save one, should be amply and freely discussed. The exceptional one is the existence of God, which, say they, is a question altogether "illegitimate." Deists of this stamp, if armed with authority to coerce consciences, might consistently enough enact laws to prevent the expression of atheistical opinions. Indeed, what is illegitimate ought to be put down, if the word "illegitimate" be used in the sense of BAD, which it manifestly is. These men, I conceive, might with perfect consistency, if not propriety, tread the same path trod ages past by Gardener and Bonner. If such conduct would not be inconsistent on the part of some of our enlightened deists, what mercy has the atheist to expect from the senseless, unreasoning multitude?

The refusal of Dr. Lawrence to dissect, or even receive, the body of Richard Carlile, speaks volumes. It is a reflection upon the liberality of the age, or rather a proof that the age has no liberality. Dr. Lawrence, it is likely, had substantial reason for thus acting—but the act itself struck me as a sign most ominous of the corruptions and rabid intolerance of the times. Richard Carlile was certainly one of the boldest, the most useful, aye, and the most honest investigator that this or any other country ever produced. In *that* consisted his crime—for that he was execrated while living—for that, oh, shame! his corpse was refused by one of the most celebrated surgeons of this age—himself, formerly, an investigator of the same school! It is true, Dr. Granger did not, like the sceptical Lawrence, shrink from the lifeless body as though it were one heap of plague—or refuse it the *honour* of dissection—but he travelled far out of his way, and took most humiliating pains to make the public understand, this *liberal* act of his, did not warrant the supposition that *he* at all sympathised with the speculative opinions of the deceased.

I willingly turn from this class of scientific investigators to the ablest of another—to Dr. Buckland. Paley has been styled the most famous of natural theologians—Buckland is al-

lowed to be the ablest of natural geologists. Sometime ago his orthodoxy was more than suspected; but he is now fast travelling towards a safer, if not a sounder reputation. Having very much frightened the clergy by his early geological investigations, he seems excessively solicitous *now* to soothe, and insinuate himself into the good graces of, that powerful class, by proving, or pretending to prove, that such investigations concerned only the *lower* departments of human knowledge—that they merely relate to physical science, and leave untouched the *higher* questions of morality and religion, which the clergy alone are competent to deal with, they being the fittest, as well as the only authorized, expounders of revelational morality and divine religion.

At a meeting held some six months ago, in the Manchester Scientific Institution, Dr. Buckland said—

To tread in the steps of our forefathers was a wise and excellent maxim in matters of morals and religion, which were not the subjects of physical discovery, but which were objects of revelation, and which were duties imposed upon them by their creator. To look for recent discoveries in those higher departments, he would not say of human knowledge, but of divine, was a matter that became them not on any occasion whatever.

To criticise this curious sample of the learned doctor's speech is foreign to my present purpose—and were it otherwise, anything like a critical display would swell this Introduction beyond all reasonable limits. I quote it to show how oddly this first-rate man of science applies the principle of investigation. He has no objection, the reader will perceive, to the freest investigation of physical questions—but as regards morals and religion, there should be no investigation whatever—these are questions so satisfactorily settled by our wise forefathers, that we have nothing more to do than simply "tread in their footsteps." According to the doctor's doctrine, our morals and our religion (the state religion, I presume) are perfect—so that improvement is entirely out of the question. Any attempt to realise the improvement of perfectness must needs be waste of labour—nay, it would not merely be waste of labour, but foolish presumption, "to look for recent discoveries in those higher departments, not of human, but of divine knowledge," and search into matters of science it becomes us not, on any occasion, to entertain. As, however, *my* knowledge is only human—as I make no pretension to divine acquirements—as I am not prepared to allow that either morals or religion are perfect, and am extremely sceptical as to the legacy of wisdom left us by our ancestors—and as, moreover, I have determined to thoroughly investigate *all* questions—relate they to "lower" or to "higher" departments of science, to morals, to politics, to religion, or to physics—I shall content myself to conclude this Introduction with a couple of paragraphs from the prospectus of the periodical:

"The most eminent judges of the land have declared their willingness to sanction the fullest expression of opinion upon all questions—speculative or practical—relate they to morals, politics, or strict science—to things *known* of this world, or things *supposed* of another—provided always, such opinion be expressed in a calm, truthful, argumentative temper.

"*The Investigator* will put the sincerity of these high functionaries to the test, and speedily decide whether Englishmen really are, or only flatter themselves that they are, free to examine *all* opinions, and free to expose *all* prejudices, in the genuine spirit of investigation."

## MORALS.

THE question of morals, as usually treated, is one of the most abstruse, uninteresting, and unsatisfactory imaginable. By common consent it seems to be virtually abandoned, as a dry, complex, though highly important, question. Whether this state of refined, no less than vulgar, opinion, may be supposed the result of the peculiarly difficult nature of the question, from the unskilful manner in which it has been handled, or, in part, from both these causes, certain it is, the philosophy of morals is but indifferently understood, and worse cared for, even among the educated portion of society. Voltaire, in a very agreeable preface to his "*Raison par Alphabet*," usually appended to the "*Dictionnaire Philosophique*," thus writes:

It is only by enlightened persons that this book can be read; the vulgar are not formed to gather such knowledge—philosophy will never be for them.

Now M. Voltaire, notwithstanding, I propose to popularise—to bring within reach of the “vulgar” the philosophy of morals, or, at least, I will attempt to do so, as I am fully persuaded there is no other kind of philosophy of one tittle its importance, more especially to the poor and ill-educated classes. Philosophy, it is quite certain, never has been for them—but I am by no means convinced that it never will be.

The shelves of our libraries creak beneath the weight of moral treatises, much better calculated to disgust than inform the student. Fortunately, no one now ever dreams of reading them, save some few literary antiquarians, who, born to wealth and leisure, if not to wit, waste their energies in ransacking the hoards of metaphysical rubbish contained in those treatises. The poor are, I conceive, negatively benefitted by being denied, from their position, access to such a mass of polluting absurdities as, under the names of moral or metaphysical treatises, everywhere abound.

The term metaphysics has been truly stated to imply\* the nature of the mental faculties. So that a science of metaphysics should and would, if treated scientifically, include the whole philosophy of morals. So far, however, from this kind of philosophy receiving even the slightest aid from metaphysics—metaphysics has been the great, if not the only obstruction, to its advance. How is it possible the philosophy of morals should make any considerable advance, while ignorance the most gross prevails, as to the nature, and, of course, the true use of the mental faculties? Of physics, that is, the general action of things, we do know something; but really, to pronounce the volumes of mere hypothesis and blunder, above referred to, metaphysical science, would be a mere abuse of terms. It is not hazarding much to assert, there can be no science where there are no facts, or where falsehoods are supposed true, and treated as true, argued and concluded upon as true, without the most slender pains being taken to prove them such.

Dr. Arnott well observes,† that

The process of analysing the facts learned by observation and experience, so as to deduce from them the general circumstances in which they resemble, is called the method of reasoning by induction—and such circumstance is termed the scientific law or truth, or scientific principle under which the facts are to be classed. . . . . The very simplicity of this process may have been the reason why the powerful genius of Aristotle disdained it as a scientific instrument, and, instead of deducing the laws of nature from accumulated facts, preferred supposing what they should be, that is to say, forming hypothesis, and afterwards would admit only such facts as squared with his hypothesis.

Now it does seem odd that, though ages have elapsed since Bacon wrote, though he is at this moment almost universally allowed to have been the greatest master of reason the world ever saw, and his method of reasoning by induction cried up, even in our universities—it does, I say, seem odd that his principles of reasoning should have been, and are still, uniformly set at naught by our metaphysicians, by those most learned of men, who pretend to teach a philosophy of morals. In their treatment of physical action, they rigidly adhere to the logical principles of Bacon; in their treatment of metaphysical action, they as rigidly adhere to the principles of Aristotle. As physicians, they will admit nothing to be true that is not agreeable with experience; as metaphysicians, they will admit nothing to be false that is agreeable to some favourite theory; and so completely have they contrived to mix up fact with hypothesis, the real with the imaginary, the useful with the worse than useless, that the honest searcher after truth, so far from being benefitted, is confused and disgusted by their speculations.

If the inductive method is the only true method of reasoning, why should any other be pursued? Surely facts which relate to metaphysical, are no less important than those which relate to physical, phenomena. If it be good to understand the operations of general nature, it is equally good to have just ideas of our own nature. Why then, I ask again, are we to investigate metaphysical questions in a different spirit, or upon different principles, than questions simply physical?

We hear continual complaints about the slow progress, or, rather, no progress, of philosophy. Professor Stewart, well known as one of the best informed and ablest of Scotch metaphysicians, quotes, approvingly, the following from the pen of Du Bonald—

The diversity of opinions has increased with the diversity of writers, in every age; and Europe, which at present possesses libraries filled with

philosophical works, and which reckons up almost as many philosophers as writers, poor in the midst of so much riches, and uncertain with the aid of all its judges, which road to follow—Europe, the centre and focus of all the light of the world, has yet its philosophy in expectation.

Those who admit the correctness of this opinion will probably think it goes far to prove there is some radical error either in the mode or the matter of human investigation, seeing that Europe, justly styled “the centre and focus of all the light of the world”—Europe, that, during the last three or four centuries, has given birth to men of talents the most varied, genius the most extraordinary, with opportunity for the full development of that genius, the most favourable—“has yet its philosophy in expectation!” Such is the confession, and I cannot but think somewhat humiliating confession, made by more than one among the ablest of our philosophers.

There are no degrees of truth. We cannot rationally say of a given proposition, it is comparatively true—or another, it is positively true—and of a third, it is superlatively true—for all propositions are necessarily either true or false. It would be ridiculous to speak as though one proposition were more true than another. In relation, however, to Du Bonald’s startling remark, that Europe has its philosophy still in expectation, I will venture to say, that if that remark is true as applied to philosophy in general, it is *specialty* true as regards the philosophy of morals in particular. In the physical sciences, there has been some progress made, some truths established, and some knowledge acquired—but metaphysical science, if the misnomer may be allowed, has been and is a mere squabble about words, an uproar among learned people as to the true meaning of certain phrases, which have, in reality, no meaning whatever. Polonius demands of Hamlet, in the tragedy of that name, “What do you read, my lord?” “Words, words, words,” is the reply. Surely Hamlet must have been reading a metaphysical book, for, of a truth, books that theologians and others call purely metaphysical, are words, words, words—and nought but words. Gibbon pronounced metaphysics “a science of words,” so that his opinion of its usefulness, as now taught, is sufficiently apparent.

Much of the obscurity that prevails, even in the best metaphysical reasonings, may, I fancy, be traced to the practice of confounding things with their qualities and relations. Language is, from its very nature, imperfect, and unless the student, especially the metaphysical student, understand that, confusion thickens upon him at every step. Thought, is always nearer the truth, than the words by or through which we attempt to express it—yet, strangely enough, this palpable and highly important fact is rarely attended to. Language, which, at best, is a mere auxiliary, is allowed to usurp the place of principle—from a mere implement it has risen to the dignity of an agent—and opinion, which gave birth to language, is confused, deceived, baffled, and enslaved by its own offspring.

It has often been said, much oftener than believed, that nine-tenths at least of human supposed differences of opinion, are, in reality, mere contentions about words—I think the saying strictly true. The countless volumes of metaphysical disquisition, and so-called moral science, seem to furnish proof positive of this. Patience and self-denial, it is said, are the principles of everything heroic—if so, I am a great hero, having had patience and self-denial enough to wade through a prodigious number of such volumes, without adding much to my stock of wisdom, and certainly without meeting with anything in the shape of metaphysical science or a philosophy of morals. Indeed, so bitter is the recollection of unprofitable hours wasted in such unprofitable labours, that were some modern Goth to threaten such volumes with the fate of Don Quixote’s library, I am not sure it would cause me the slightest uneasiness. Except, perhaps, to antiquarians, but-terners, or rag merchants, they are not only useless, but positively mischievous. If the famous Alexandrian library had contained nothing better than such treatises on metaphysics and morals as are here condemned, no man could reasonably regret that the Caliph Omar used them to warm the baths of Constantinople.

The term metaphysics implying, as already remarked, nature of the mental faculties, it must be clearly explained before the philosophy of morals can be entered upon with advantage—I shall therefore attempt a clear explanation of metaphysics, considered as a science, in No. 3, and afterwards proceed with the development of those principles more properly belonging to the philosophy of morals.

Let not the reader shrink from the investigation, as this

\* Dr. Arnott’s Introduction to “Elements of Physics or Natural Philosophy.”  
† Introduction, &c.



species of study should, and will, if rightly pursued, prove no less delightful and far more profitable than most others. Nothing surely can be imagined more interesting to an inquisitive human being than a science which demonstrates the nature, and points out the right use of, his mental faculties. Such a science is metaphysics.

## PARTY POLITICS.

POLITICAL partisanship is the natural product of political inequalities, which political inequalities have their source in the competitive principle of human action. So long as it shall be found convenient or necessary for the denizens of this planet to compete rather than to co-operate—so long, it seems likely, there will be, even in the best regulated commonwealths, the most glaring inequality of wealth, and the political influence that wealth infallibly gives—and so long will men marshal themselves under the banner of party. It is perfectly natural that the man of property should unite himself with the man of property, as, by so doing, he receives, no less than gives, support. The wealthy, especially those who are enormously so, have few or no sympathies with the poor. They have scarce anything in common with them. They dread the poor because they wrong them, and dislike them because they dread them. We commonly dislike those we injure—whether such injury be wilful and voluntary on our part, or whether it be conduct imposed upon us by the highly artificial state of society in which we live. The competitive principle *may* be a useful principle—it *may* be the only possible principle of human action, but it is abundantly evident that for its advantages we pay a tremendous price. The ten plagues of Egypt could scarce match this one plague of party politics, yet party politics is but a small part of the price we pay for the *advantage* of struggling against, instead of aiding, each other. I am of opinion that at least ninety-nine of every hundred human evils may be traced to individualism. But for individualism, poverty might speedily be swept from the earth, nay, even the fear of poverty, justly declared worse than poverty itself, might be blotted from the terrible list of human agonies. It is individualism makes men poor, and it is individualism keeps them so. I speak of men in the gross; for it is sufficiently obvious that under any form of government the inevitable tendency of individualism, based upon the competitive principle, is to place large masses of wealth in a few hands, not, however, in those hands which have produced it—no; from the dawn of civilisation to this hour, those who produced the least got the most—and the least worthy have been, with exceptions rare indeed, best loaded with honours and fortune. Lord Byron, who hated the word *invariable*, asked,\* “What is there of human—be it poetry, philosophy, wit, wisdom, science, power, glory, mind, matter, life, or death, which is *invariable*?” to which I confidently answer, the producers of wealth are *invariably* poor, the producers of wealth are *invariably* held in contempt; the consumers of wealth are *invariably* held in honour. Byron denied that there could be *invariable* principles of poetry, or any thing else, except, perhaps, things divine; for, of course, said he, I put things divine out of the question; and so will I, not knowing their precise connection with principles *variable* or *invariable*—more especially as I have shown that there are *invariable* principles of competitive political economy, or science only human. It is, however, perfectly futile to shrink from or complain of inevitable evils, whether those evils arise out of individual or aggregate human nature. If, as Godwin† asserts, inequality be, to a certain extent, unavoidable, it were idle to complain of those evils consequent upon such inequality; though I perfectly agree with that able writer, “it is the province of justice and virtue to counteract the practical evils which inequality has a tendency to produce.” This same author penned the following remarkable sentences:

There is no alternative, but that men must either have their portion of labour assigned them by the society at large, and the produce collected into a common stock; or that each man must be left to exert the portion of industry, and cultivate the habits of economy, to which his mind shall prompt him.

\* The first of these modes of existence deserves our fixed disapprobation. It is a state of slavery and imbecility. It reduces the exertions of a human being to the level of a piece of mechanism prompted by no personal

motives, compensated and alleviated by no genuine passions. It puts an end to that independence and individuality which are the genuine characteristics of an intellectual existence, and without which nothing eminently honourable, generous, or delightful can in any degree subsist.

From these passages it is plain that Godwin was no friend to the principle of co-operation. He evidently considered that the competitive was the only healthy principle of action; and it may be so, though I strongly doubt it. As to the distinction of independence and individuality, there is very little of either in the present wretchedly corrupt state of society. But whether Godwin was right or wrong in his estimate of principles, it is not my present purpose to consider; I am quite sure that property, or money, its symbol, is the root of all evil; and whether it be practicable or not to abolish private property—or whether the competitive principle harmonise better with the nature of man than the principle of co-operation—certain is it that no tongue can utter the miseries—no words express the desolating influences of institutions born of private property, or one millionth part the mischiefs bred by competition. Where there is no property there can be no injury, was an expression of Locke—and presuming, as I needs must, that he meant *private* property (for without property of some kind or other there could be neither benefit or injury), I am much disposed to agree with him. It is property or no property determines almost all men's political opinions, and the factions, to one or other of which, they almost all ally themselves. No man in his sober senses can expect to find Barings, Rothschilds, and Goldsmids, in the ranks of the chartists. Of every fifty chartists, I will venture to affirm, there are forty-nine either miserably poor or fearing to become so. It is the smart of poverty and oppression that, more than aught else, makes us desire to change forms, and establish new principles, of government. It is *natural* the poor should be radical, and the rich conservative or whiggish. The tory party of this country is composed chiefly, if not altogether, of land and fundholders, rich bankers, and rich people of all imaginable characters—people who, thoroughly satisfied with things as they find them, prudently desire to “let well alone.” I should as soon expect to see Sir Robert Peel act like a perfectly honest man, as any considerable number of Tories turn radical reformers. *Poor* Tories have been known to advocate republicanism, and “nothing less;” but *rich* Tories rarely dream of such perilous innovations. The abuse heaped by one party upon another would be amusing were it not so mischievous. There is, indeed, little else heard among party politicians than the language of denunciation. The Tories denounce the Whigs, the Whigs return the compliment—the Chartists denounce Whigs, Tories, and each other. Neither Whigs or Tories are so silly as Chartists in this particular. They do not say much about concord, but they understand its value—and whatever the character or object of their party struggles, never forget to aid each other in the all-important object of crushing every effort that the democratic portion of society may make for a just measure of liberty. The radical reformers, amongst whom may be included the great bulk of Chartists, are split up into numberless fragments. A rope of sand is the best symbol of their unity. The Tories seldom make war upon each other—no, they reserve their strength for their enemies. The Whigs are not quite so well disciplined as the Tories—their principles are not so well defined or clearly understood, but it is seldom Whig bites Whig. How different with the Chartists! A struggle between parties professing widely different principles, we can understand, and look on with complacency or even approbation—but to see a party playing the game of its enemies—to see its leaders intent on nothing so much as each others destruction, is a sight to make sincere reformers weep, and the enemies of liberty chuckle. Unfortunately there is no reforming political party in this country that seems exactly to know for what it is struggling or what it would accomplish if entrusted with authority. The whole history of the Whigs prove them time-serving, deceitful politicians, the creatures of miserable expedients. There are doubtless some most excellent Whigs, but as a party they hate the only kind of reform that ever can destroy the present political system, a system that must be utterly annihilated ere a better can be more than talked of. The tory party is chiefly composed of the avowed opponents of all change. With them reform is another term for innovation—so far they are honest. The Tories know that one step on the reform road begets the immediate necessity for another, which, in its turn, demands a third, and so on till the goal shall be reached

\* See Letter on Bowles's Strictures on Pope.

† See “The Inquirer,” p. 150.

—the, to them, fatal goal of republicanism. The whigs know this quite as well as the tories, but the whig party never did act honestly upon its own knowledge. My own conviction is, that the bitterest enemies of republicanism may be found in the whig ranks. Whig animus was clearly shown by the enunciation of finality doctrine. Lord John Russell allowed that ugly cat to slip out of the bag. We may rely upon it, that whig interests and feelings, no less than those of tories, are bound up with the existing order of things, which both factions will maintain by deceit or force, by political treachery or the bayonets of our soldiery. Whigs and tories are the parties whose stake in the country is largest, or, rather, they are the only parties who have any stake whatever. If our political system were swept away to-morrow, what *could* the people lose? what could the toil-worn artisan or wretched agricultural serf lose by the substitution of a republic for the present monarchical system? What have they to lose? Why nothing, literally nothing. Gain they might, but lose they cannot by any conceivable political change. How perfectly natural, therefore, is it that a very large majority of the people should cry aloud for reform, even though they know little better than the grass they mow or the cloth they weave what is the kind of reform required. Here lies the seat of all political disease. The people have not sound political knowledge, and therefore are they altogether unfit to work out their own political salvation. Amused by party names, bewildered by party interests, and inflamed by party jargon, their passions rather than their reason brought incessantly into play, is it marvellous that for the last sixty years there should have been an almost continuous struggle for reform, while at this moment we have a parliament at the nod of anti-reforming tory ministers—a parliament perhaps the most venal and contemptible base that ever pretended honestly to administer the affairs of a great nation. The cause of this is nowhere else than in the people themselves, the cure, it is they alone can effect. They have too long been befooled by party names and party humbug. The time has now arrived that the people should assume a dignified attitude—an attitude worthy of men resolved to be free. They should never lose sight of the sound political maxim—that it is not so much the tyrant who makes the slave, as the slave who makes the tyrant. They should eschew political partisanship, and fix their attention upon the principles of politics—pay far less attention to men and more to measures. They should cease to abuse this or that obnoxious statesman, while they themselves are the chief, nay sole, supporters of that infernal system of politics which generates them. As surely as serpents and other noxious reptiles are generated in the pestilential marshes of the Nile, so surely are viper statesmen generated amid the slime and filth of our political system.

The late Richard Carlile said, in 1839:

I am in truth and honesty bound to declare, that the mind of the reformers throughout the country is in a miserably defective state. They are an inferior class of politicians. There is yet no mental manhood among them. But few of them say what they mean, and fewer understand the bearing of what they say. The prevalent feeling among reformers is that there is something wrong, without the knowledge to attack the wrong and apply the remedy.

I know that chartists and other classes of reformers have not been used to such plain, blunt, truthful language as this; but they should have been, and must be, used to it before they can be politically and morally benefitted. No one class of society has been more grossly flattered than those who may emphatically be styled the *working classes*. This is the great curse entailed upon them by demagoguism. The working classes need truth, not flattery—they need honest friends who will help them to a thorough knowledge of their own defects—who will tell them political liberty is not to be achieved by a nation drunk either with gin or fanaticism—who will disdain popularity purchased by vile pandering to popular prejudices—in a word, who will say, no matter at what personal cost, everything that they think ought to be said, and do everything they are convinced ought to be done. Who dares do this is no demagogue—he is a patriot; nay, he is more than a patriot—a citizen of the world. But in vain may we look for such, while men are blinded by party and sectarian feeling. The mere partisan, be he whig, tory, chartist, or radical, cannot be a sound, though he may be an honest, politician. I think that party, class, and sectional opinion is an inevitable consequence of party, class, and sectional interests. Opinion is the parent of action, and from party opinion must proceed party action. To war with an

unavoidable necessity were vain and foolish. Herein, it seemed to me, Richard Carlile was in error; he did war with a necessity invincible. He saw clearly enough the mischiefs of party, but he did not seem to see at all that party action not only had its advantages as well as disadvantages, in itself considered, but that it is the only useful kind of political action that men in the aggregate have hitherto been capable of performing to any considerable extent. He maintained that all party societies were so many obstructions to rational progress, and invariably denounced them in the severest terms. Now, though I see that party societies breed monstrous mischiefs, I see, also, that much more terrible mischiefs might follow their annihilation. It can hardly, I think, be doubted that there are some individuals who, in consequence of certain special idiosyncracies, work most beneficially to the public on the principle of individualism. Such a man was Richard Carlile. The atmosphere of party was not at all suited to his constitution. He would have tainted it, and it would have enervated him. Standing alone, he achieved wonders—and perhaps it is not too much to say, he did, single handed, more for liberty in general, and the liberty of the press in particular, than any other man of his time. But all reformers are not Richard Carliles—if they were, we should hear no more about whigs, tories, chartists, or socialists—for he disdained partisan politics—seeing only in a republic, founded upon knowledge and virtue, the means and end of political liberty.

## INTRODUCTORY PAPER

### TO AN ANALYTIC SERIES ON THE COMPARATIVE RATIONALITY OF THEISM AND ATHEISM.

THE theist supposes there is a Being distinct from the universe. He does not pretend to prove the existence of this supposed Being, but he does pretend it is rational to think there is such a Being. The atheist denies this, he declares it is not rational to believe there is anything supernatural, subnatural, preternatural, or unnatural.\* He disputes the validity of the theistical supposition, and challenges theists to show that it is possible, from intuition, from testimony, from analogy, from experience, or from all these combined, to gather any proofs of such supposed Being's actuality. The theist is called upon to accept this challenge—he is called upon to show that some knowledge of the Being he calls God, Jehovah, Lord, is attained, or attainable from any one or all of these sources. The theist simply supposes, or positively states, there is one unnatural Being, and by all the laws of right reasoning, he who supposes any given proposition to be true, is morally bound to show the grounds of his supposition, while he who positively states what he cannot as positively prove, exposes himself to merited contempt. The man who states anything, no matter what, must make good such statement, or jeopardise his reputation. Such is common practice in relation to common questions, the practice is sound in principle, and capable, methinks, of salutary application to *all* questions. Wherefore should he, who not merely supposes but dogmatically states there is an unnatural Being, and gives such suppositions Being a variety of names, not be held morally bound to sustain that statement, no less than he who makes any other statement whatever. Yet, strange as it may appear, "tyrant custom" here steps in, and not only shields the pert stater, who is not ashamed to declare what he is unable to verify, but actually tramples on the atheist, because he ventures to assert, as *his* opinion, that the theist states to be undeniably true, what is not only incapable of demonstration, but altogether contrary to right reason, and the clearest evidence of sense. The very term atheist, inconsistently objected to by theists as unphilosophic, never could have been invented *but* for theists. They assert the existence of something unnatural, and, in the same breath, allow that something to be invisible, inscrutable, and incomprehensible. Had so extraordinary an assertion never have been made, or had the maker thereof supported it by convincing reasons and irrefragable arguments, it is incredible that there should have been any individuals irrational enough to dispute the theistical

\* The word unnatural, though never used in this sense, is, in my judgment, the least open to objection. I shall uniformly use that, discarding entirely the words supernatural, subnatural, and preternatural.



assertion. How is it possible, moreover, any man could be *without* God in the world, if his neighbours had not first supposed themselves with God in the world? The theist says, there is a God—I feel it, I know it—my reason is convinced, and my feeling satisfied, as to the existence of an unnatural Being. The atheist replies—you tell me there is a God, but where are your proofs of such an unnatural existence, I neither think nor know it—my reason is not convinced, neither are my feelings satisfied as to the existence of any being, not part and parcel of the universals. I have already admitted that the terms atheism and atheist are not strictly philosophic, but it is surely not the theist who should complain of that—for not only are the terms theist and theism open to the same objection, but they are the foolish terms from whence atheism and atheist originate. Upon the principles above laid down, the man who positively asserts there is an unnatural Being (no matter what name may be fastened upon it), is morally bound to prove such Being's actuality—but even theists freely allow no proof can be furnished. God, say they, can only be seen by the eye of faith. This does not satisfy the philosopher, who, in relation to intellectual phenomena, is convinced reason is all, and all is reason—he can see nothing, save by the eye of reason. A philosopher of this stamp I cannot but think must be an atheist, he must, if consistent, stop where reason stops, and advance where reason advances. Now, it is generally allowed that reason does not prove a God. I am aware there is division and subdivision among theologians upon this point—but it cannot be denied, that very many learned theologians have doubted the sufficiency of reason in this particular, maintaining that none can be assured of God's existence, save those to whom he has vouchsafed the saving grace of faith, whose influence can alone enable them to understand his special revelation of himself.

While I lay in Bristol gaol, an anonymous religious friend obliged me with some extracts from a discourse delivered before the "New Hampshire Alpha of Phi Beta Happa Society," by Taylor Lewis, professor of Greek in the university of New York. One or two of which extracts are so much to my present purpose, as to justify their quotation—they are as follows:

Nature alone cannot prove the existence of a Deity possessed of moral attributes. Its adaptive plastic power, the highest diversity of the naturalist, may not only be regarded as distinct from the true Deity, but also as inferior in true dignity to the rational soul of man, although far surpassing it in power and the unerring skill of its instinctive workings. Unless a voice from within proclaims the necessity of something more, nothing comes from the world without. We fear not to take this ground, because there is such a voice within, which, although dead, may be recalled to life. We love this strong resource of evidence—and to fortify it still more strongly, the testimony of the scripture, in mutual action confirming and confirmed by this inward voice. . . . . The believing spirit has its seat in the moral nature rather than the intellectual. It imparts to the latter a peculiar direction, and a peculiar energy, which it repays in turn by a clearer light, and a more convincing evidence. This is the case, not only with the truths specially revealed in the bible, but also in reference to those which are styled the prime elements of natural religion itself. We should believe in a God, not by induction from evidences of design in the external creation—not even in the far higher ground, that speculative reason demands the all perfect idea as the first of necessary truths—but irrespective of this, from a deep sense of our internal wants—from a feeling of the awful horror and loneliness of our condition without him—of the distressing vacuum produced in the social affections by a suffering atheism, with all its frightful train of consequences, when it takes full possession of the mind. We should let the thought of a godless universe press with all its horrors upon the soul, until it returns in exalting gladness to the belief that HE IS, and 'that he is the rewarder of all who faithfully seek him.'

These extracts are very curious and valuable. Their author stands confessed a sentimental theist, one who *feels* rather than *knows* there is a God. He sets aside the notable design argument, as of no value, and candidly tells us, "We should believe in a God, not by induction from evidences of design in the creation." He declares "Nature alone cannot prove the existence of a Deity possessed of moral attributes," and affirms, that unless a voice from within proclaims the necessity of something more (than nature), nothing comes from the world without—so that, according to this notable species of theistical philosophy, the atheist cannot be refuted by an appeal to anything without—evidences of design, &c. in the universe being "inferior in true dignity to the rational soul of man." He assures us of "the distressing vacuum produced on the moral affections by a suffering atheism, with all its frightful train of consequences, when it takes full possession of the mind;" an assurance which would lead me far from the main subject of this introductory paper to attempt an investigation of—but I cannot suffer it to pass without entering my protest against it. I have yet to learn that the atheistical David Hume, suffered from his atheism, or felt the

"distressing vacuum," this American professor is so sure atheism produces in the moral affections. I have yet to learn that Benedict Spinoza would have been a happier or a better man, than he is admitted to have been, even by his enemies, had he been a christian instead of an atheist. I have yet to learn that the late Julian Hibbert felt any vacuity in his moral affections. All who knew him, freely allow that a better man never lived. His whole life was spent in acts of benevolence, acts not springing from greediness of fame, but love of truth and goodness. If ever man "did good in secret, and blushed to find it fame," that man was Julian Hibbert, the avowed, uncompromising atheist. The voice from within him, and, figuratively, there is a voice within every human being, proclaimed the necessity of nothing more than morality, nothing more than unceasing well-directed action, for the advancement of truth, and the practice of virtue. How could such a man experience a void in the "moral affections?" How could he who clothed the naked, fed the hungry, and never failed to aid the oppressed, need religionising or suffer from his atheism? A suffering atheism, forsooth, I verily believe there never was an instance yet, of one who had deliberately reasoned himself out of all faith in unnatural agency, who failed to become a wiser and a better man, in consequence of that very act. This experience has taught me, the experience of others may justify them in arriving at a different conclusion. But more of this hereafter. The question of religious influence is far too vast, far too complex, to be settled by a few strokes of the pen, I could not, however, allow myself to quote without comment, this professional *ipse dixit*, as, had I done so, some readers might have concluded most erroneously with respect to them. My sole object in giving these extracts, is to illustrate the dogmatism of theists. This American professor is of course a theist—and how does he proceed to prove the existence of a Deity? Why, by declaring that a voice from within proclaims the necessity of something more than the universe, naively remarking, that unless this voice from within do proclaim such existence, nothing in the shape of proof "comes from the world without." Now it would, as to me it seems, be difficult to understand how he or any other professor can know this. He may hear the voice within, or fancy he does, very distinctly—but does it follow that all others have an equally delicate sense of hearing? or is it proved by his naked assertion there is such a voice to be heard? He declares there is such a voice within, which, "although dead, may be called to life." Perhaps so, but surely saying there is, does not prove that there is. For centuries the most learned metaphysicians declared in favour of the now exploded doctrine of innate ideas. They said, we were all born with ideas, that the ideas were in us, though we might know nothing about them—they might be dead ideas, but could easily be awakened into life. In vain it was protested that certain ideas they declared innate, thousands had lived to a good old age without the slightest conception of—in vain it was pointed out by the great Locke, that to think and not to know we thought was an odd sort of thinking, just equivalent to no thinking at all. The innate-idea people were sure they could not be wrong—mistake on their part was quite out of the question. They felt they had innate ideas themselves, and most logically concluded other people had innate ideas also, or might have them if they liked. There are, said they, such innate ideas, which, though dead, may be recalled to life—just as our learned American tells us, there is a voice within; and if there is not, or as he expresses it, if it be dead, may be recalled to life. The notion is very old, but, I fancy, none the better for that. Religionists have from time immemorial, bid us listen to the voice within. Moralists have told us confidently to follow the *light* within. The common opinion among moralists now is, that the much talked of light within is a curious kind of Will o' the Wisp, the pure creation of disordered brains. It is worthy of remark, that the light within always shone clearest in those who could neither see nor exhibit any other kind of light. No wonder, therefore, the light without, was deemed a mortal enemy to the light within, and a state of blindness as to external things, an essential requisite in those who would clearly see the light internal. Locke spoke of a class of men who "would fain persuade us to put out our eyes that we may the better see the remote light of an invisible star through a telescope." Now, some such men were those who fed the lamp within, and extinguished the lamp without—who put out, as they phrased it, the bodily eyes, that the eyes of the spirit might



see the light within. I am inclined to the opinion that this voice within, proclaiming, as the American professor assures us, the necessity of something more than nature, is in all respects quite fit to keep the light within company—and as the most blind could best see the light within, it is likely the most deaf will best hear the voice within.

Here we have one specimen of theism, one form of the many-shaped opinions and fancies classed under that head. We have the theism of a professor of Greek in the university of New York, which sets aside as worthless all the arguments drawn from real or imagined appearances of plan in the universe—which sets aside the "divinity of the naturalist, as inferior in dignity to the rational soul of man"—which, in point of fact, sets aside all reasonings that either have been, or can be advanced in proof of the existence of a God with moral attributes—and insists that those whose inward voice is dead, or whose inward voice is so feeble as not to be hearable, must be ignorant of all that relates to an unnatural Being. Some theists will conclude that such a theist is not widely different from an atheist, as many theists insist that "the testimony of scripture is itself amply sufficient, apart from all other kinds of proof." Some are sure "an atheistical astronomer must be mad," and confidently appeal to the book of nature as demonstrative of God's actuality, as a book none can mistake or judge amiss of, save the wilfully blind—by no means agreeing with Plato, that no human being was ever willingly deprived of truth. Now, the atheist denies that the existence of anything unnatural is demonstrated, or even shown worthy of credit, either by a presumed inward voice, or by the study of natural phenomena, or by both conjoined—and as to "scripture testimony," the atheist fails to discover therein infallible proof of any proposition whatever, not absolutely self-evident, therefore standing in no need of proof. Still less is the atheist prepared to admit that any part of that testimony establishes as undeniably true the theistical dogma. The atheist, in brief, denies the rationality of supposing or believing there is a being who "existed before all the world," a Being of whom it is declared in our Church Liturgy, "The sea is his, for he made it, and his hand prepared the dry land." Such a denial may be dogmatic, but what term should be applied to those who presume to make assertions which call for such denial. If the theist lay claim to the right of supposing this, or stating the other, surely it is but fair that the atheist should have equal right to protest against such supposition, or such statement. One mere hypothesis is about as good as another mere hypothesis. One dream nearly as valuable, I presume, as another dream—and really it is hard to understand why either dreamery or hypothesis should be only admissible on one side, or why atheists should be rated most dogmatic for not dreaming or hypothesising as the theist thinks fit—while these latter, who are seldom otherwise employed, should be accounted very pinks of modesty—especially when we reflect upon the fact that the very terms atheist and atheism owe their existence to their opposites theist and theism. They are, as already observed, terms quite unphilosophic—but it should not be forgotten that to those who supposed and suppose an unnatural Being, we owed, and still owe, their use. No man can properly be called a theist, that is a believer in one God, until God ceases to be incomprehensible—for it is impossible sincerely to believe in the existence of anything, of whose mode or kind of existence we have no idea whatever. In like manner, it is silly for any man to call another atheist, or disbeliever in such a Being, until something is positively known respecting such Being's existence—or, as Daniel Wytenbach more clearly states, "No one can properly be styled atheist, or accused of being 'without God in the world,' until what manner of being God is shall be explicitly declared."

### SPECULATIONS ON MAN.

The proper study of mankind is man.—POPE.

THE origin of man is still clouded in mystery. There is nothing like fixed or unanimous opinion upon that question. How did man originate? is still asked, still unanswered, and it is probable will be asked, and still be unanswered through a succession of ages. Facts fail us, and theory, however ingeniously constructed, without known facts for basis, may serve to amuse us, but add little to our stock of positive

knowledge. How useful, though bitter, is the lesson read to us by this simple truth, that men discuss no less confidently, furiously, and, it may be added, foolishly, the question of human origin, at this hour, than in the days of Epicurus. Nay, farther, it is not by any means proved to the satisfaction of many thinkers, that men or women every originated at all. Toulmin not only maintains the doctrine of an eternal universe, but the eternity of our planet, and the eternal existence of man, as man, upon its surface. Aristotle taught a similar doctrine more than two thousand years ago. The reader who is not familiar with Aristotle's peculiar opinions, will be astonished to learn that he not only maintained the infinite divisibility of matter—that the universe is full, and that there is no void in nature, but, also, that our world is eternal—that the sun has always revolved as it does at present, and that it will always do the same—that one generation of men has always produced another, without ever having a beginning. He was of opinion, that if there had been a first man, he must have been born without father or mother—which he thought repugnant to nature. His observations with respect to birds are exceedingly curious. He declared it impossible there could have been a first egg to give the beginning to birds, or that there should have been a first bird which gave the beginning to the eggs, for a bird comes from eggs.

Leslie, in one of his "Letters to a Friend," thus alludes to this singular reasoning of Aristotle:

Some, because they know not what to say, suppose the world and all things in it to have been from eternity, and to have gone on, as now, in a constant succession of men begetting men, trees springing from trees, &c., without any beginning—but if it was always as it is now, then everything had a beginning, every man, bird, beast, tree, &c., and what has a beginning, cannot be without a beginning. Therefore, as it is evident that nothing can make itself, it is equally evident that a succession of things must have had a beginning—a succession of beginning, for that would be literally a beginning without a beginning, which is a contradiction in terms.

There are some flaws in this reasoning of Leslie's, too palpable to escape observation; these I shall pass over, but there are one or two others, not at all obvious, though, perhaps of more importance, these I will endeavour briefly to point out, as it is always useful to expose sophistry, however defective the theory against which it may be levelled.

Leslie tells us it is evident that nothing can make itself—which sentence means, I presume, just this, that nothing can begin to be, without a cause. Now, so far is it from evident, nothing can begin to be without a cause, that some of our best philosophers have disputed, and still dispute, the proposition. Hume, in his "Treatise on Human Nature," distinctly allows, what indeed never was doubted by him or any other atheist, namely, that every effect must have had a cause, the word effect implying cause, as the word cause implies effect—effect being a relative term, of which cause is the correlative; but Hume properly insisted that the true state of the question is not whether every effect must have had a cause, but whether anything could begin to be without a cause, a question Leslie does not appear to have caught a glimpse of—hence his dogmatic, because thoroughly unsustained, assertion, "it is evident that nothing can make itself." Besides, if it is evident that nothing can make itself, how did the Being Leslie believed to have called the universe out of nothingness make itself? If the atheist is overwhelmed by the idea of a self-existent universe, how can the theist hope to explain satisfactorily a self-existent God. The man who thus confidently asserts nothing can make itself, while he denies that anything can possibly be self-existent, is the most curious of nothingarians, and appropriately enough follows up his first assertion, namely, it is equally evident a succession of things must have had a beginning; for I readily admit it is equally evident, in other words, not evident at all.

No man in his senses would hazard the assertion that anything could cause or make itself. Consequents or effects are the inevitable results of their antecedents or causes; but Leslie, in arguing that the universe could not make itself, forgot that his argument rested upon data purely hypothetical, for where are the facts which can possibly lead us to any conclusions whatever with respect to an antecedent of which the universe was the consequent? How can we reasonably conclude there was a time when there was nothing?—a conclusion Leslie's reasoning renders unavoidable, unless, indeed, we admit the impossible hypothesis of a material God, an immense Being, whose immenseness, nevertheless, occupies no space, by whose mere will the universe came into existence.



Though those who persuade themselves, and would fain persuade others, the universe began to be, are driven to such wretchedly absurd hypothesis, it is far otherwise with the philosophers who maintain, what is now scarcely anywhere disputed, namely, that man did once begin to be. The absolute creation and positive beginning of the whole is altogether inconceivable, but any one may easily conceive a period when man, as man, was not. Not only can we conceive that man began to be, but facts seem firmly to have established the opinion, that he must have had a beginning. Geologists tell us there was a period in our planet's history when its outer crust and surface soil could not possibly have produced, or if produced, maintained in being, any existing form of animal life. The Aristotelian hypothesis of man's eternal existence, as man, is now scouted by every tyro in geology. Indeed, the labours of Cuvier, Lyell, and Buckland, have decided that question for ever. In proof how little doubt is entertained respecting it by popular authorities, I will quote a few passages from "Chambers's Information for the People," No. 2, article Geology:

In fact the world *must* have been in the possession of reptiles for a many thousand times longer period than it seems to have been in the possession of man. . . . The earliest animals and plants are of the simplest kind. Gradually as we advance through the higher strata, or, in other words, as we proceed through this record of *progressive creation*, we find animals and plants of higher and higher structure, till at last we come to the superficial strata, where there are remains of kinds approximating to the highest of all the animated tribes, namely, man himself. But, before the above discoveries, there remained one remarkable gap in the series. The quadruman, or monkeys, who form an order above common mammalia, but below the bimana, or human tribes, were wanting. Now this deficiency is supplied; and it is shown that every one of the present forms of animated existence, *excepting the human*, existed at the time when the superficial strata were formed. The only zoological event of an important nature subsequent to that period is *the creation of man*; for we may consider of a lesser importance the extinction of many of the specific varieties which flourished in the geological ages, and the creation of new. . . . The eyes of a trivial little animal (the trilobite) carry to living man the *certain knowledge* that millions of years before his race existed, the air he breathes, and the light by which he sees, were the same as at this hour, and that the sea must have been in general as pure as it is now.

Now this, it must be confessed, is anything but orthodox information for the people—anything but the sort of information that will enable them to believe the Mosaic account of man's origin to be a true account, whatever they may believe with respect to its divinity. According to Moses, the world was created somewhere about six thousand years ago. According to the writer in Chambers, *millions* of years ago the air man at this moment breathes, and the light by which he sees, were in all essentials the same as now. Which are we to credit—Moses or our geologists? Which are we bound to adopt—conclusions forced upon us by myriads of facts, and the evidences of our senses, or the conclusions of theologians based on Mosaic records—records composed by an individual, or individuals, who probably knew less about geological science, or strict science of any kind, than the most ignorant frequenters of our mechanic's institutes? I read in the first book of Moses, called Genesis, that on the sixth day of the first week of heaven and earth—six thousand years ago, or thereabouts—"God said, Let us make man after our own image," &c.; I there find it distinctly stated that God did then create man after his own image. Well, it may be true; but Dr. Buckland, no less positively than Moses, tells me: "We learn from the records of geological history that there was a time when reptiles not only constituted the chief tenants and most powerful possessors of the earth, but extended their dominion also over the waters of the seas, and that the annals of their history may be traced back through thousands of years antecedent to that latest point in the progressive stages of animal creation, when the first parents of the human race were called into existence." Well, this may all be true, too; but it is impossible that what Moses said, and Buckland says, can both be true—seeing that they flatly contradict each other. Unless, indeed, we can manage to swell the six days, or five-and-a-half days, which, according to the Mosaic record, elapsed before God created man and woman, into the unmentioned thousands of years Dr. Buckland tells us we "learn from geological history must have elapsed ere the first parents of the human race were called into existence." I care not to impute any man's motives—still less the motives of Dr. Buckland or the Messrs. Chambers, but I am bound to say, that if they did not intend

by their writings to destroy all faith in the literal interpretation of Genesis, they have most effectually done so; and really, those Christians who think there is efficacy in prayer, should not, as they are wont on every seventh day, exclaim: "From our enemies, good Lord, deliver us," but rather cry most fervently: "From our *friends*, good Lord, deliver us!" for it is most assuredly their friends, or those who wear friendship's mask, who have done their religion most serious damage. It is vain for Dr. Buckland, and other friends to Christianity of similar stamp, to hope favour may be curried with the clergy of these realms by declarations such as the doctor made at Manchester, about "treading in the steps of our forefathers, in matters of morals and religion," being a rare and excellent maxim—while, by publishing the results of his geological researches, he is overturning the religion of those "wise forefathers." The clergy may, and do, forgive the most outrageous attacks on morals, old or new, but they never forgive the man who directly or indirectly aims at the destruction of their religion. Perish science! say they, so that religion be maintained—perish the beggarly elements of morality! so that gospel truth penetrate the hearts of men. Now I think it is a fact beyond all question, that the truths of geology are playing the very mischief with the truths of Genesis. For some almost unaccountable reason, the truth of Moses is very different from the truth of Buckland, Cuvier, or Lyell. In the sciences, truths are invariably harmonious, and so well assured are men in general that truths never clash, that it has passed into a kind of proverb, that one truth never can be opposed to another truth. Truth, though many featured as Proteus, is always truth; nor is it even imaginable that one feature should fail most perfectly to accord with every other feature, whether taken individually or collectively. How happens it, then, that the truth as it is in Genesis, does not accord with the truth as we read it in the book of nature? I will myself venture to answer the question I have asked. A literal reading of the Genesis history of creation is not truth—let our theologians and theophilosophers say what they please. It cannot be true that five days after the world's production out of nothing, man was made in the image of the world's producer, or any image whatever. The facts of geology demonstrate that the Mosaic record cannot be literally true—and though theologians may, as some have done, under like difficulties, say, so much the worse for the facts, I say, so much the worse for the fictions. Fiction ought always to give place to fact—and so do men of every creed allow, when their own creed is not the fiction. It is really amazing how sternly will even the most religious people abide by the decision of facts, save only when facts decide against them—then it is so much the worse for the facts. Now facts do force all who heed them to certain conclusions with respect to the origin of man. How the universe originated, if it ever did originate, we have no data whereon to raise a decision. No data—no conclusions, should be the motto of all who seek wisdom. Every line that has been written about the origin (as the mad writers choose to call it) of the universe, is purely imaginative—the concoction of morbidly excited minds—and has not advanced our knowledge of things unnatural or natural a single step—nay, such writing is now, as it ever has been, the chief obstruction to the advancement of useful knowledge. But the origin of man is a practical question—a question not merely curious in itself, but profitable to consider, and that he did originate, facts the most conclusive have, I think, been adduced. Geologists have sufficiently proved there must have been a first man. Aristotle's doctrine, that to suppose such a man is to suppose him born without father or mother—a supposition repugnant to nature—avails little against the crowd of facts collected by men of science, which all go to prove that, whether repugnant to nature or not, man did begin to be, as man, and that at no very remote period. Whether, as some suppose, there was a time when "a shoreless ocean tumbled round our planet," I take not upon myself now to pronounce—but it is an established truth that there was a time when human nature did not exist. How man came into existence, and when, none can precisely determine—but the question has given birth to speculations the most interesting. Some of these I shall briefly consider in my next paper under this head, and then attempt a full development of man's *nature*, which is likely to be more useful, though perhaps less pleasing, than any mere speculations as to his *origin*.

# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TO HIS GRACE

## THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

### LETTER I.

I ADDRESS your grace as head of a church, believed by protestants to be the only church of Christ—a church, if not the most learned or powerful, at least the most *wealthy*. My chief reason for so doing I will briefly state, as, first, because you are the acknowledged head of such a church; second, because you have the reputation of fairness, candour, learning, and humility; third, and last, because I am neither christian, mohammedan, pagan, nor, indeed, a believer either in the truth or utility of any religion hitherto taught to man by man—yet, nevertheless, am quite willing to become christian, if your grace can convince me that christianity is rational and true. Did I live in a mohammedan or pagan country, I would freely offer the same terms to the priests of those religions, as I am an investigator, and altogether indifferent as to what my creed may be called, if it be but rational; and I do most solemnly assure your grace I would most joyfully avow myself a christian, could I do so with sincerity. Your grace must be aware that neither our feelings nor our opinions are at our own disposal. We cannot love that which is, apart from any will of our own, odious to us—we cannot hate those things or beings which cause in us delightful emotions—neither can any human being think a religion true by any mere desire on his or her part to do so. Indeed, thought is but a modification of feeling, being made up of ideas, which ideas seem to be nothing more than transformed sensations; but your grace, I am sure, is far too learned to need being told such almost self-evident truths as these. I am sure your grace must be aware that there is no more virtue in belief or vice in disbelief—not one jot more of merit, for example, in believing christianity is the only true religion, than demerit in believing, as millions do sincerely believe, that Allah is great, and that Mohammed is his prophet. Now it is precisely because your grace has the reputation of fairness, candour, and christian learning, that I, who am *not* a christian, have determined to address this series of letters to you. I have carefully studied the Bible—I have read all, or nearly all, the most famous books which have been written by priest or layman in favour of christianity—yet am I still an unbeliever. The difficulties of christianity seem to me insuperable; as, however, what is an insuperable difficulty to one man vanishes like smoke before the genius of another, I will proceed to lay before your grace the difficulties of which I complain, presuming that if any human being can solve them, your grace is that being—and in the confident expectation, that if your grace can solve them, you will not fail to do so. That every religion has its difficulties is generally admitted—that the christian religion has, I am sure; and as countless volumes have been written to show the difficulties of scepticism, I do not suppose any one will be so fanatical, much less your grace, as to be angry with me for ferretting from christian records the chief difficulties of christianity—especially when it is considered that I invite

your grace to solve these difficulties, and thereby cure me of my scepticism.

It is but fair to inform your grace, that the idea of opening this subject to you was suggested by a perusal of the Rev. Mr. Faber's "Difficulties of Infidelity;" a book containing a very complete collection of problems for deists—problems, by the way, I think, and doubtless your grace thinks too, the cleverest deist will be puzzled to solve. I by no means hope to present your grace with so ample and unique a collection of problems for christians; but it is not wise to do nothing because we cannot do everything—or, as Locke more happily expresses the same idea, refuse to use our legs because we have not wings to fly. I shall, therefore, without further prelude, lay before your grace the difficulties of christianity; and should I succeed, either in becoming christian, or awakening your grace to the necessity of making belief in the truth, consistency, and usefulness of christianity, a far more easy task than any who take reason for their guide now find—all the merit will clearly attach to the Rev. Mr. Faber, whose book of deistical difficulties so tickled and moved to imitative instinct, that nothing would content me short of dealing with christian difficulties in a somewhat similar manner. This is freely mentioned, in justice to that learned author, upon the principle of giving praise where praise is due.

I may farther state to your grace, in justification of my present course, that when in Bristol gaol I was strenuously urged by the chaplain, Mr. F. Jennings, to make the christian religion my chief study—to search the scriptures, more especially, which your grace knows well, contain the cream of christian principle, and marrow of christian doctrine. A "solemnised review," therefore, of leading topics in that *sacred* volume will not only be legal, but exceedingly useful.

Now, it is strange, though true, that the first, and by no means the least, formidable of christian difficulties may be found in the very first line of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" for even your grace will allow that it can have but one of two meanings; in other words, it must be literal or figurative. If the words, "In the beginning," &c., are to be interpreted literally, confusion is an inevitable consequence, as a literal interpretation involves glaring absurdities—plunging reason into the murky region of incomprehensibles, and yet the interpretation is perfectly orthodox—it is the interpretation of the whole christian church. Catholics, protestants, and dissenters of every class, accept, as matter of fact, the tale about Paradise, Adam and his rib, the woman Eve, the talking serpent, and the tree of knowledge. Few, indeed, will allow "all these things are an allegory," though Paul himself declared it.

Your grace cannot be ignorant of the many rhapsodical foolish stories that have been invented at various periods, by authors who adhered to the literal reading. Josephus gravely tells us, that in the days of Adam, the serpent conversed most fluently and familiarly with man, and that he only lost the gift of speech by abusing it. Some Jewish doctors have asserted that the serpent was prompted to tempt Eve by a spirit of impudicity. Others, that Samael, the prince of devils, got upon a serpent as big as a camel, and that thus mounted, he approached Eve, in order to tempt her. Others



again relate that the serpent took great advantage from Eve's not relating the prohibition in the same terms God had prescribed. God, say they, had forbidden Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge, or even to touch it—but one day as she was near the tree, the serpent laid hold of her, and drove her against it—and having made her sensible she did not die upon it, he led her to infer from thence that she would not have died if she had ate of that fruit. But, though your grace may justly consider religion is much scandalised by such idle tales, yet no one can feel surprised that the brains of men, who interpreted literally the book of Genesis, should have given birth to them. Even the learned Dr. Adam Clark was not ashamed to declare, in his commentary on the bible, that he considered the serpent that tempted Eve (the Hebrew word is *Nachash*) to have been a creature of the ape kind. Now, to make it appear that our first mother was tempted by a baboon is altogether scandalous. Lord Monboddo affirmed that Adam had a tail, no less than Eve's tempter—but I am of opinion the eccentricities of his lordship must be less offensively revolting to your grace, and christians in general, than those of so able a divine as Doctor Clark. Had he been a bishop, he should have been unfrocked the instant he penned such irreverent, libellous matter. When the venerable Bede said, "The devil chose a serpent that had a face like a woman, that like might be pleasing to like," he ventured a foolish yet almost harmless opinion—but to libel our mother Eve as Dr. Adam Clark undoubtedly did, by declaring she was seduced by a baboon, to "violate God's holy law," is really too bad.

Such, your grace, are some of the shocking opinions to which the literal interpretation of Genesis has given birth. I could multiply such opinions *ad infinitum*, but no doubt your grace will be well satisfied with the few I have adduced. This, however, is but one view of one side of this interpretative difficulty—for if, as some of the more learned christians contend, the first chapters of Genesis are to be read as an allegory, as not literally but figuratively true, in brief, as spiritual fiction, not material fact—why, the absurdity is neither so glaring nor so gross as in the other case, but the mischief to christianity, as popularly understood, is infinitely greater. That this singularly mischievous difficulty may be easily understood by your grace, I must here enlarge a little.

In Genesis, we find an account of paradise, of the formation of man out of the dust of the ground—of a woman made from one of the said man's ribs—of the trees of good and evil—of the speaking serpent—of Eve's seduction—of Adam's transgression, &c. Now, your grace will not fail to perceive, that to say the whole of that account is fabulous is, in effect, to declare the christian religion is fabulous. The christian religion is not taught by its priests as a new religion, but as the new dispensation of an old religion—of the old Jewish religion. Any reasoning, therefore, that should go to prove the first chapters of Genesis a pack of fables, would undermine the foundations of christianity—for that religion which rests upon fable, must be itself fabulous. *Figurative*, not *fabulous*, is the term generally applied to Genesis by divines and others who are rash enough to defend christianity by allegorising its foundations. Which of the two terms we use is of no consequence to any argument, as your grace well understands. Every one who has paid the slightest attention to these questions, must be aware that a figurative, no less than a fabulous history, is a false history, if taken in its obvious sense, though the concealed sense of both figurative and fabulous history may be true. The allegorisers of the bible contend that, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelations, there is a concealed sense, which is the true sense; the vulgar reading they despise as altogether absurd and mischievous—as they phrase it, the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. It is evident, that if man never literally fell, he could not have been literally redeemed—a figurative fall, leaving no escape from a figurative redemption, as is acknowledged by Horne, and a host of distinguished theological writers. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, declares that, "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life"—which words seem to imply that an offence had been committed by one (Adam), not, of course, a figurative or imaginary, but a real offence. By the offence of one, Paul obviously meant the offence of Adam, as by the righteousness of one, he meant the righteousness of Christ. Now, it does strike me as positively certain, that if no such place as the

Genesis paradise ever actually existed, no such person as Adam could have committed an offence therein; for how could a real offence be committed in an imaginary garden? And I think your grace will agree, it would be odd, indeed, if true, that judgment should come upon all men to condemnation, as punishment for an offence which had never been committed. Those who think an ideal offence entailed upon the whole human race real punishment, must have strange notions as to the distributive justice of that being they say presides over particular and universal destinies. The reality of Christ's righteousness is, in point of fact, altogether contingent upon the reality of Adam's offence—no fall, no redemption—no offence unto death, no justification unto life. Then, how amazing is it, that some of the most learned christians, ancient and modern, should have treated the tale of the fall of man as an allegory, while they believed, or, at all events, pretended to believe, his redemption through Christ, a literal fact. Origen, Augustine, Burnet, and many other pious christians, have taken this dangerous ground. Woolston, your grace will remember, adduces, in his remarkable book on "The Miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ," a palanx of authorities in disproof of the literality of Genesis. But Woolston was, at least, consistent, for having allegorised the doings of Adam, Eve, Serpent, &c. in paradise, he allegorised the doings of Christ out of paradise. Disbelieving that the story of the fall of man was intended to explain a literal transaction, he, I repeat, consistently denied that the story of his redemption was to be received as detail concerning a literal transaction. The leading feature of Woolston's book was an attempt to graft a mystical or allegoric sense on what is written in the new testament concerning the actions of Christ. As, however, Woolston has the reputation of an "outrageous blasphemer," I do not expect either that his example will be followed, or his opinions deemed of much weight by your grace, or any other sincere christian of the orthodox literal school. Nor should I have cited him, but for the fact that he is one of the very few writers who has pushed the allegorising principle to its legitimate extent, who did not allegorise the first chapters of Genesis, and then stopped short—but boldly, if not prudently or wisely, aimed at allegorising the actions of Christ himself. Bishop Burnet was either less clear-headed or less honest than Woolston, as I am not aware that he ever questioned the literalness of all those transactions in which, according to the obvious sense of the new testament history, Christ was a principal actor, and yet he laboured hard to show that there never was a literal paradise, a literal tree of knowledge, a literal woman to pluck its fruit—in short, he denied that the first chapters of Genesis were either more or less than allegory. The contempt he held those in who stood firm to the literal reading, is best evinced by the humorous satirical style in which he handles their opinions. In the 7th and 8th chapters of his famous "Archæologie Philosophicæ," your grace will find that he has reflected with much severity upon the text, as literally interpreted. After ridiculing the Mosaic hypothesis, as to the creation of man, and objecting to the notion of woman's being "built with one of Adam's small bones," he proceeds thus:

God, upon pain of death, prohibits Adam and Eve from tasting the fruit of this tree (the tree of knowledge); but it happened, upon a day, that Eve, sitting solitary under this tree, without her husband, there came to her a serpent or adder; which, though I know not by what means or power, civilly accosted the woman (if we may judge of the thing by the event), in these words, or to this purpose:

SERPENT.—All hail, most fair one! What are you doing so solitary and serious under this shade?

EVE.—I am contemplating the beauty of this tree.

S.—'Tis truly an agreeable sight, but much pleasanter are the fruits thereof. Have you tasted them, lady?

E.—I have not, because God has forbidden us to eat of this tree.

S.—What do I hear! who is that God that envies his creatures the innocent delights of nature? Nothing is sweeter, nothing more wholesome than this very fruit; why then should he forbid it, unless he were in jest?

E.—But he has forbid it, on pain of death.

S.—Undoubtedly you mistake his meaning; this tree has nothing that would prove fatal to you, but rather something divine, and above the common force of nature.

E.—I can give you no answer, but will go to my husband, and then do as he thinks fit.

S.—Why should you trouble your husband about such a trifle? Use your own judgment.

E.—Let me see, had I best use it or no? What can be more beautiful than this apple! How sweetly it smells! but it maybe it tastes ill.

S.—Believe me, it is a bit worthy to be eaten by the angels themselves; do but try, and if it tastes ill, throw it away, and say I am a great liar.

E.—Well, I'll try them—thou hast not deceived me; it has indeed a most agreeable flavour. Give me another, that I may carry it to my husband.

S.—Very well thought on; here's another for you; go to your husband with it. Farewell, happy young woman. In the mean time, I'll go my ways—let her take care of the rest.

In another part of these chapters, this author, after discussing the question of Eve's formation, proceeds to say:

For my part, I do not pretend to decide this dispute, but what more perplexes me is, how, out of only one rib, the whole mass of a woman's body could be built. For a rib does not equal the hundredth, perhaps not the thousandth, part of an entire body. If you answer, that the rest of the matter was taken from elsewhere, certainly Eve might much more truly be said to have been formed out of that borrowed matter, whatever it was, than out of Adam's rib. I know very well that the rabbinical doctors solve this business quite another way; for they say, the first man had two bodies, the one male and the other female, whose sides stuck together, or, as some will have it, their backs; that God cut them asunder, and having thus cloven Eve from Adam, gave her to him for a wife.

It must be plain to your grace, and every man of ordinary capacity, that an author who could pen such paragraphs as are here quoted from the "Archilogie Philosophique," had very little respect for the literal reading of Genesis, and I do assure your grace, as an honest man, I have no respect for it whatever. I cannot believe that a God in the beginning, about six thousand years ago, as we are told, created the heavens and the earth. I cannot believe that he made man after his own image, out of the dust of the ground. I cannot believe that the first woman, Eve, was made up entirely of a single rib. I cannot believe that at any period, serpents *did* speak, and did *not* crawl. The short is, your grace, I cannot believe a single syllable contained in the first chapters of Genesis, as vulgarly and orthodoxly interpreted. I agree with Origen, Augustine, and nearly all the early christian fathers, that the whole is an allegory—but, as before remarked, to allegorise Genesis, is to allegorise the fundamental of the christian religion, in other words, to destroy it. This, your grace, is the first difficulty of christianity. In my second letter I will state others of a no less formidable character.

I am, with all due respect,  
Your grace's well wisher,  
C. SOUTHWELL.

## CHAPTER ON THE CREATION AND DESIGN QUESTIONS.

"COURAGE, friends, I see land," said the caustic Diogenes, when his eye met the blank page of a dull, wordy book. With the same sort of joyous feeling, it may be presumed was experienced by the cynical philosopher, when he had finished his reading task, did I some few weeks since, get to the blank page of Sharon Turner's "Sacred History of the World," certainly as tedious and unprofitable a book as I ever felt it my duty to wade through. It was first published, I believe, about twelve years ago, when it was most extravagantly lauded by the clergy, and their allies of the press, as a very wonderful production, which, in a certain sense, it most undoubtedly is. The Messrs. Chambers, in No. 43 of their journal, assure us it is a production of surpassing value. "The creation of the world (say they) as related to us in the most ancient history and book now existing (the bible I presume is here meant), and which has been universally venerated in the christian world for its truth and its origin, from the commencement of the christian faith, is naturally the first subject of investigation to this erudite author, while the opinions he expresses throughout seem of the soundest description."

Before allowing this erudite Sharon Turner to tell his own tale, I may observe that his writings have so well satisfied the bishops of our church, that those right-godly reverends evinced their gratitude by obtaining him a pension, which, of course, the people most religiously pay. A man who has earned a pension by his pen, may naturally be credited with having written something quite intelligible and very useful. Now, let us see what manner of useful knowledge this Sharon Turner was pensioned for writing, and which the pious Messrs. Chambers inform is of the soundest description.

First, this sacred historian, the pensioned Sharon Turner I mean, tells us poor knowledgeable wretches that—

Our globe rolls with undisputed and unsupported freedom through a boundless space, and is connected by immediate relations with the planets of our system—more remotely with the splendid stars whose nature and numbers we have not yet ascertained—and occasionally, at intervals, some of which are recurrent, with the rapidly moving of the comets. These rush

suddenly and unexpectedly, for the most part, into our visible heavens, by laws and for purposes unknown; rather advertising us of their existence, and amazing us by their appearance than exercising any perceptible effect or imparting any knowledge of the causes of their journey, or of the place from which they come and to which they so mysteriously depart. In this grand system of existence man is the most intelligible being visible to our material sense, and we have as yet no decisive evidence that any thing below the Creator will ultimately become his superior.

Who can deny the sublimity of all this. No one, surely. A globe rolling with undisputed and unsupported freedom is, indeed, marvellous to contemplate. Then those singular things called comets rushing suddenly and unexpectedly, without invitation, into our visible heavens. How very extraordinary, then, if we only consider, that after all this rolling and rushing, *sans politesse*, into our visible heavens, we can't tell why they come, or why they go, the inconsiderate vagabonds never so much as dropping a hint as to the "causes of their journey," or of the places from which they come, and to which they so mysteriously depart. How amazing, too, is the fact that we have as yet no decisive evidence that anything below the Creator will be ultimately man's superior. Oh sublime writer, wonderful Sharon Turner! Surely the body which has the honour to envelop so superb and far-reaching an intellect, deserves to be richly pensioned. We read in Grecian story that the heroic Agesi-laus, observing upon a certain occasion the extraordinary tactics and marvellous ability of his great rival Epaminondas, cried in a loud voice: "Oh the wonder working man!" And all but envious sceptics must feel greatly tempted to bawl out something of the same kind, after reading the effusions of Sharon Turner's pen. Really, our bishops ought to keep them in lavender, or like Othello's kerchief—

Dyed in mummy,  
Which the skilful conserved of maidens' hearts.

Had this fortunately illustrious, and illustriously fortunate author not written more or less than just the lines I have quoted, he would have put in a fair claim to the suffrages of christian posterity; but the fact is, every page of his "Sacred History" is literally studded with gems quite as rich. The following passage, christians no doubt will think leaves materialists without excuse for their materialism.

The sacred history of the world is built on the grand truth expressed in the first verse of the Pentateuch. "In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heaven and the earth." This is the foundation of all religion, whether popular or philosophical. The intellectual world professes an invaluable treasure in this simple but emphatic information. It deserves the epithet invaluable, because it is a fact which could be certainly known to us only from revelation as no human eye could have witnessed the event and because the greatest minds of antiquity were in doubt and darkness, and in opposition to each other on this subject, as we should still be of the book of Genesis had not descended to us. Instead of deriving the world from God, it was more common among the classical nations to derive their God from the world. Hesiod, as well as Epicurus, makes his divinities to be an order of beings springing out of the material universe. Several pagan nations even in our own times thus account for their existence. Few have thought the Deity to be the Creator of the earth or the heavens; and the mind had become so confused on the point, that it was more generally supposed that either these were eternally what they are, or that they were united into what we perceive them to be by a fortuitous concourse of self moving atoms. Such ideas were highly poutrised in ancient times; and until the prevalence of christianity diffused the knowledge and authenticity of the Mosaic record as to the origin of things, nothing was positively known or really believed about it. The more we investigate the chimerical opinions of mankind on this great topic, the more we shall appreciate the first chapter of Genesis. On no subject of its thought has the human mind been more fantastic than in its suppositions on the origin of the gods whom it chose to worship and of the material world in which it was residing. Revelation has banished there by giving us the desirable certainty.

Such is Sharon Turner's account of creation as it is proved (?) in Genesis—and if it do not convince us of his infallibility, it will at least explain why he is such an immense favourite with the clergy. His reasoning, the reader will perceive, is ultra-theologic, that is extra-assumptive, and it is probable falls upon the pate of sound believers, like Wat Tyler's hammer upon the tax-gatherer's unlucky cranium. The Mosaic record is the only true one as to the origin of things, so Sharon Turner tells us, and those who deem his word infallible proof of that much questioned fact, will, of course, believe him. It does not logically follow, I think, that the Mosaic record is true, because he *said so*. If the Mosaic record be true, every opposing record must be false; but there are very many records of creation in the world, which flatly contradict the record ascribed to Moses, of whose truth, nevertheless, there are thousands of Sharon Turners ready to bear testimony.

Those who assert a record, whether of creation or anything



else, to be the only true record, are bound to make good the assertion, by an appeal to admitted facts, not to their own mere opinions—but Sharon Turner evidently did not feel himself called upon to do or attempt anything of the sort, for throughout his whole book there cannot be found a single argument, or one solitary fact, in support of the strange proposition that everything did, about 6000 years ago, spring out of nothing, by the command of nothing. All I can find in support of so extraordinary a proposition is the assurance of Sharon Turner, and other equally wise christians of the dogmatic school. He writes as a man quite certain upon the point, as a man who knows the universe was positively spoken into existence by a tongueless deity. Revelation has purged him of all doubt, and left him in a state of most “desirable certainty”—but how he contrives to certify revelation we are not informed. So far as I can gather from the volume under consideration, he is certain the Mosaic record is a revelation from God, because he is certain—and doubtless all sound believers will feel certain for the same reason. See, good reader, by what a short and easy cut these theologians reach the panted for goal of desirable certainty.

How the Messrs. Chambers can consistently and honestly lavish praises on Sharon Turner, and reasoners of his stamp, I really am at a loss to understand—for, as shown in the first numbr of this periodical, they have laboured very hard, and many think very successfully, to prove that our planet, not to speak of the universe, has existed and rolled round its centre of motion for *millions of years*. This fact is so vastly important, and so decisive against the Mosaic cosmogony, as taught to us by christian priests, that I will here pause a little to prove it is a fact, and that I do not slander those profitably pious publishers. In their “Information for the People,” No. 3, article geology, there is an elaborate description of a certain *extinct* species of shell-fish called trilobites, whose remains, like those of ammonites, they tell us are universal over the earth. They then proceed to instruct us that:

The eye of the trilobite has been formed with 400 spherical lenses in separate compartments on the surface of a cornea projecting conically upwards, so that the animal, in its usual place at the bottoms of waters, could see every thing around. As there are two eyes, one of the sides of each would have been useless, as it could only look across to meet the vision of the other; but on the inner sides there are no lenses, that nothing may, in accordance with a principle observable throughout nature, be thrown away. It is found that in the serolis, a surviving kindred genus, the eyes are constructed on exactly the same principle, except that they are not so high, which seems a proper difference, as the back of the serolis is lower, and presents less obstruction to the creature's vision. It is also found that in all trilobites of the later rocks, the eyes are the same.

This little organ of a trivial little animal carries to living man the certain knowledge, that, *millions of years before his race existed*, the air he breaths, and the light by which he sees, were the same as at this hour, and that the sea must have been in general as pure as it is now.

So much for the *consistency* of Messrs. Chambers—of their honesty I say nothing, let each one take Paul's advice, and “be convinced in their own minds thereupon”—but I must say, that if any parties can reconcile the “certain knowledge,” of Messrs. Chambers with the “desirable certainty” of Sharon Turner, they are cleverer than I am. I don't even think such reconciliation possible. One might believe the divine character of the Mosaic record, as expounded by Sharon Turner—one might believe in the facts here stated by Messrs. Chambers, but none, save an undoubted lunatic, can fancy he believes both. Some people, whose consciences are extremely elastic and credulity boundless, may find little difficulty in supposing all was actually created six thousand years ago, and at the same time suppose that “millions of years before man existed as man, myriads of animals breathed the air he now breathes, and enjoyed the light he now enjoys.” I have consulted several very learned christian persons upon these paradoxical suppositions, and in no single instance could I get a satisfactory explanation—they all shook their heads, and prayed God to bestow on me that grace and faith without which they much feared I should never see the divine nature and perfect truth of these seeming contradictions.

What is popularly styled the *design argument*, is supported by reasonings and facts closely analogous to those urged by Sharon Turner in support of the *creation argument*. There are, however, besides christians, many who lay claim to the character of rationalists—men who reject what theologians call the written word of God—yet are firmly convinced that the universe must have been a work of design. Design is a term implying a designer, and, of course, a creator, when used in relation to the universe—as it is obvious a planner or

designer must be credited with a prior existence to the thing planned or designed. If all things, as these rationalists assert, were designed by an intelligent architect, that architect must have existed *before* all things—which seems to be a considerable difficulty in the way of these deistical persons.

Christians are divided in opinion as to this question of design. One section, the less numerous, but by far the more intelligent, candidly avow that *nature does not teach a God*, and that all our knowledge of him is gleaned from his written word—while the other section positively assure us *there is clear evidence of design imprinted on the universe*—evidence so clear, that none save the wilfully blind and wilfully wicked can fail to perceive it. Both sections appeal to the written word, or bible, as infallible authority in support of their totally opposite opinions. Those who rely upon the design argument, as sufficient to prove a God, even though he had not favored us with a written exposition of himself, appear to be justified by the authority of Paul, who declares, in the Epistle to the Romans, i. 20, “The invisible things of him (God), from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal godhead; so that they (the rejectors of God, having no written revelation) are without excuse.”

The other section of christians, nothing daunted by so plain a text, backed, too, by authority of the chief apostle, stoutly maintain that the scriptures never urge *the works* to prove the *being* of God, but only his eternal power and godhead, *when revealed*, quoting Heb. xi. 3, “Through *faith* we understand that the worlds were framed by God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear,” and many other texts which seem equally decisive against those who tell us clear evidence of design is imprinted on the universe, consequently that *nature does teach* an intelligent designer or God.

The Rev. John Ellis, in his “Inquiry whence cometh wisdom and understanding to man,” argues most strenuously against the notion, that without the written word, men could know God. He denies that a man can be sure of *his* existence from a study of natural operations. His words are:

Creation or producing something out of nothing and innumerable beings at a word, let it be so, starting out of noentity, is no object of reason, but of faith. Here all things are infinite; and he who can neither discover the contrivances of omniscience, may also perform the works of omnipotence. The very hearing of creation, is by the word of God.

Here we are told by an eminently orthodox divine, that he who can clearly discover the contrivances of omniscience may also perform the works of omnipotence—in other words, none but a man with capacity equal to a God, can discover design, plan, or contrivance in the supposed works of a God. Verily such doctrine, from christian mouths, is enough to make the bones of Paley rattle in their “narrow house” with horror and indignation.

The Messrs. Chambers estimate very differently, arguments drawn from appearances of design in the universe. This will be seen from the following rich morsel of logic, that the reader who has leisure to satisfy himself may find in No. 8 of their “Edinburgh Journal:”

The more narrowly we examine the works of nature, the more and more we are convinced that the whole order of the universe is the result of *plan*, or a previous design on the part of a Deity. Perhaps the cause for ordure, or putrescent matters having a bad smell, has never occurred to the minds of many individuals, yet that bad smell has been given for the wisest of purposes. It is in order that the objects producing the offensive scent may be carried out and buried, and by being deposited under a covering of earth, assume new properties, and be the means of yielding a rich crop of new food.

Here, then, it is *demonstrated*, that cleanliness or the removal of every description of nuisance from the doors of cottages and other places in the vicinity of the dwellings of man, is expressly ordained by God Almighty himself, and that he who is remiss in doing so, absolutely resists the beneficent will of the divinity.

This is one of the best specimens I ever remember to have met with, of a sublime argument pushed to the ridiculous. The whole paragraph is curious and redolent of material for reflection. Its author judiciously headed it by “The good providence of God,” for if it can be “demonstrated” that even ordure, or other kinds of stinking nastiness are beneficial to man, seeing that without they stunk in his nostrils, or otherwise annoyed him, he could in no other way be induced to rid himself of a nuisance; I say, if this can be demonstrated, why it is clear, the providence of God, supposing there really be such providence, is *very* good. But it has

always appeared to me, though offensive scents may sometimes answer useful purposes—that it would have been far better for us if the God, said to be the omnipotent ruler of this world, had so arranged matters from the beginning, that we might never have been troubled with offensive scents, or any other offensive things. To say he could not have pre-ordained that our lives should have been a succession of varied and intense delights, instead of an alternation of pains with pleasures, is, in effect, to deny his omnipotence. Any wish not involving an absolute contradiction or impossibility, we can readily conceive an *all-powerful* God could realise. I have read of a Spanish monarch, who said that, had he been at God's elbow when about to create the universe, he could have given him some useful advice. Now, if the monarch in question meant, as I presume he did, that so much of the universe as comes within the range of human observation is altogether inferior to the human idea of perfectness, not only will atheists agree with him, but also a very considerable number of christians. The Rev. Hugh M'Neil, who is, I believe, minister of Saint Jude's church, Liverpool, and a christian of perfectly orthodox stamp, in the course of a lecture delivered to more than four hundred of the Irish clergy, uttered the following remarkable sentences:

I am convinced, I say, that from external creation no right conclusion can be drawn concerning the *mooral* character of God. Creation is too deeply and disastrously blotted, in consequence of man's sin, to admit of any satisfactory result from an adequate contemplation of nature. The authors of a multitude of books on this subject have given an inadequate and partial induction of particulars. Already aware (though perhaps scarcely recognising how or whence), that God is love, they have looked on nature for proofs of this conclusion, and taken what suited their purpose. But they have not taken nature *as a whole*, and collected a conclusion fairly from impartial premises. They expatiate on the blessings and enjoyments of life, in the countless tribes of earth, air, and sea. But if life be a blessing, death is a curse. Nature presents the universal triumph of death. Is this the doing of a God of love? or are there two gods, a kind one giving life, and an unkind one taking it away—and the wicked one invariably the victor? In external creation, exclusively and inadequately contemplated, there is no escape from Manichæism. It is vain to say, that the death of the inferior creatures is a blessing to man—for why, in the creation of a God of love, should any such necessity exist? And how would this account for the death of man himself?

Here we have a strong argument, exceedingly well put—an argument, too, from the lips of a fire-and-brimstone orthodox christian divine, in favor of belief in two unnatural governors of the universe, or in favor of no unnatural governor whatever. I do not agree with the Rev. H. M'Neil, that there is no escape from Manichæism, that is, belief in two opposing un-natural Beings, or principles, as they are phrased, if we exclusively and inadequately contemplate the external world, for it is a fact, that atheism is a loophole through which thousands have escaped and do escape from it. What the four hundred Irish clergymen, the four hundred avowed believers in only one God, could have thought of such stunning doctrine, I am at a loss to conceive, unless, indeed, they were prepared to cast to the winds every vestige of natural theology, every vestige of proof that there are, on the face of our universe, clear evidences that it was designed to be by one and one *only* designer. What can the Messrs. Chambers think of such doctrine? They write as knowingly about "God Almighty," as though they were on hand-and-glove terms with him.

The Messrs. Chambers tells us, God *planned* that matter, when in certain states, should emit a foul effluvia, on purpose that man might be annoyed into carrying it out and burying it—not dreaming, as it appears, that man might have been so organised as to delight in cleanliness and industrious pursuits, without either being goaded or stunk into such a species of disposition. Byron furnishes the true idea upon this question in his "Cain." It is there clothed in such simple yet splendid diction, that I cannot forbear quoting it.

CAIN. Why art thou wretched? Why do I exist?  
 Why art thou wretched? Why are all things so?  
 Ev'n he who made us must be, as the Maker  
 Of things, unhappy! To produce destruction  
 Can surely never be the task of joy,  
 And yet my sire says he's omnipotent:  
 Then why is evil—he being good? I ask'd  
 This question of my father; and he said,  
 Because this evil was the path  
 To good. Strange god, that must arise from out  
 Its deadly opposite. I lately saw  
 A lamb stung by a reptile: the poor suckling  
 Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain  
 And piteous bleating of its restless dam:  
 My father plucked some herbs, and laid them to  
 The wound; and by degrees the helpless wretch  
 Resum'd its careless life, and rose to drain  
 The mother's milk, who o'er its tremulous  
 Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.

Behold, my son! said Adam, how from evil  
 Springs good!  
 LUCIFER. What didst thou answer?  
 C. Nothing; for  
 He is my father; but I thought, that 'twere  
 A better portion for the animal  
 Never to have been *stung at all*, than to  
 Purchase renewal of its little life  
 With agonies unutterable, though  
 Dispell'd by antidotes.

Fully assured that nothing I can add would do ought save weaken the admirable effect these lines are likely to produce on all thoughtful readers, I gladly dismiss this part of my subject, and pass on to a consideration of some other valuable arguments that have been advanced against the dogmas of natural theologians, of whom Paley is the acknowledged chief.

In an early number of the "Quarterly Review," the leading idea of Paley's much vamped up "Natural Theology," is cleverly dealt with, and the illogical reasonings by which he attempted to establish the truth of that idea thoroughly exposed. One passage, in particular, delighted me so much, that I at once committed it to memory; and though years have since elapsed, I pledge myself the following is that passage, *verbatim et literatim*:

Paley's leading argument involves a *petitio principii* (or begging of the question)—when he says "there cannot be design without a designer, contrivance without a contriver," he takes for granted that which he should prove. The atheist affirms, that in the series of events which we observe in nature, there is neither design nor contrivance; and this affirmation cannot be disproved by the contrary affirmation of the theist, that design or contrivance exist. It is self-evident, that there cannot be contrivance without a contriver; design without a designer. But the question at issue between the atheist and the theist is this, is there contrivance, is there design?

This is tolerably well from a tory reviewer, who, it may be presumed, has strong theistical, as well as high-church predilections—indeed, it has quite bothered me to understand how so fair a statement of the question could have been smuggled into the pages of the "Quarterly;" for as to its being an authorised, legally imported bit of truth, I cannot bring myself to believe. However, in a number I know it was, though the number has jockeyed my recollection. I will, however, carefully search for, and if successful in ferretting it out, will bring it under the notice of my readers. For years I have been fully convinced that the argument drawn from what are nakedly assumed to be appearances of *plan, design, or contrivance* in the universe, is the most shameless of all moral humbugs—the most palpably sophistical, yet, strange to say, confidently relied on, that human ingenuity ever pressed into the service of chimeræ. Judge, then, ye readers who enthusiastically love truth, how great was my joy to find the conscienceless Paley's "invincible" argument stigmatised as an assumption, a mere *petitio principii*, by the leading writer of so notable a review as the "Quarterly."

I have now lying before me, No. 20 of a paper called "The Prompter," published in 1831, by Richard Carlile, which contains as concise, yet complete a detailed refutation of Paley's grand sophism, as I ever remember to have met with. Having quoted the "Quarterly," to demolish the *principle* of "Natural Theology," I shall now give the substance of the "Prompter" article, by way of finisher to its *details*. The article is headed "Reason *versus* Paley," and after some unimportant preliminary observations, the writer proceeds thus:

Paley lays the foundation of his "Natural Theology, or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of Deity," upon the showing, that if a person should find a watch never having the least conception of such a thing, he would infer that the watch had been made by an intelligent contriver, and, by parallel reasoning, that the orb on which we live had been made by an intelligent contriver.

In this imaginary case, Paley supposes two parallels—first, that of the watch, as parallel with the planet on which we live—secondly, that of the contriver or manufacturer of the watch as parallel with the contriver or manufacturer of the orb. Now this second is the important problem, for if I can show that it is not a parallel, it will be useless to compare the *first* position, as it falls, as a matter of course, with its superior, from which it emanated.

My answer then is, that any person finding the watch, could form no other idea, than that it had been made by *some identity*, either in his own or some other form, he not having the power to imagine any property, existence, or thing of the least conceivable power, but in matter; therefore his mind would instantly revert to an *identity* as the power that moulded, sawed, handled, &c. this manufactured watch; and that the identity must have made it with, or from, matter, by some process.

Here, then, the attempted parallel breaks down, through the inability

\* This idea was not original with Paley; he has plagiarised it from Cicero, who supposed a house instead of a watch, to prop up the falling gods of the pagans.



of Paley, or any other person, to conceive an identity, or any other property of the least conceivable description, that could make this or any other orb—there being nothing to make it from—for “out of nothing, nothing can come;” and as to the supposed order, “let it be done, and it was done,” reason knows it not; persons may say they believe it, but it is a play upon words—for they have no conception of its possibility. They have neither identity to make the world, nor matter to make it with, yet it is said to be a parallel, but put in juxtaposition as follows, its absurdity may produce abundance of belief, but no reason:

The mind travels to identity, as the Can the mind travel to identity, maker of the watch, and to matter as the maker of a world, or to the property of which it is made. matter to make it of, when nothing existed to produce it from?

Therefore, logically speaking, this apparently clear position of Paley's is reduced, by reason, to its proper bearing, namely, erroneous conclusions from illogical premises.

It may be said, that Paley has, in his “personality of the Deity,” admitted the identity. He says, page 444, “Now that which can contrive, which can design, must be a person.” Now a person must have organisation; and this Paley would say without parts or passions!!! But the same argument as before decides the fate of his personality—for this personality is not allowed to be matter; but if not matter, what is it? But it may be as well to prove the kind of illogical premises which he has promulgated, for the purpose of producing credence that some intelligence superior to man may exist. He supposes, that as there are some animals with fewer senses than man is possessed of, they might reason, that none higher than themselves existed, because they could not see any superior, but the attempted parallel here breaks down again; because the first position assumes that it is matter, denying the existence of superior matter, whereas the inference is, that man being matter, is to reason upon what he cannot conceive, namely, something out of matter!!! Can this be called logical inference?

The logical use of our reason says, that a person is sane or insane, in the proportion of his giving utterance to coherence or incoherence. Also, that a person who makes use of words to which no ideas can be attached, and which are totally inconceivable, is incoherent.

Therefore, unless a person can give some idea of immateriality, he must be considered incoherent, and is consequently insane when he makes use of that term.

But as though contradictions were not numerous enough, when the incoherency of immateriality is at any time handled, Paley says, in page 448, “Of this, however, we are certain, that whatever the Deity be, neither the universe nor any part of it which we see can be He.” In this I agree, with the addition, that the universe is interminable space. Pray can the mind travel out of space?

But to show how the learned in these matters disagree, Pope says: “For though in thousand worlds this God be known, 'Tis ours to seek him only in our own.”

Paley, it appears, has searched, and positively says that his Deity is not to be found in this part of space.

Here my quotation from this admirable article must come to a close. Indeed, had I space to spare, the rest of it being little to the main purpose, to transcribe it would be useless. I will remark, in conclusion, that it is ascribed to the pen of the late much lamented Julian Hibbert, one of the noblest specimens of humanity that ever trod this planet.

## THE COMPARATIVE RATIONALITY OF THEISM AND ATHEISM.

EVEN those of my readers who have merely glanced at the writings of our chief christian divines, and therefore cannot be presumed to have more than surface-knowledge of their scope and principle, can hardly have overlooked the important fact that they all proceed upon the assumption, either positively asserted, or clearly implied, that there is a God. The paper introductory to this series, explained the meaning of that term, at least, so far as explanation can be given of a term, allowed on all hands to be inexplicable and meaningless. In the paper referred to, it was dealt with as a short term used by theists, to signify an uncreated, independent, intelligent Being, who, by a simple act of volition, caused the universe to be, and by a series of volitions now governs it. A Being none pretend to have any distinct conception, or knowledge of, though every sincere theist is morally certain he exists, exists, be it borne in memory, apart from nature, apart from all that acts, or can act on human sense, and entirely out of the reach, not merely of what is commonly understood by the word reason, but also of imagination; for theists unanimously allow, that imagination the most vivid, even in its highest flights, is unequal to the conception, either of god's true nature, mode of existence, or essential attributes.

That which is confessedly incomprehensible, cannot properly be reasonable. Only those propositions can be determined reasonable, that fall within the range of experience. Judgment must first lay hold on a question, before it can pretend to decide with respect to its truth or falsehood. In the eye of sober judgment, one chimera, or chimerical speculation, is as good as another, relatively to truth, for chimeras

being opinions unsupported by known facts, they are all esteemed equally valueless to the philosopher. Now, all religionists acknowledge the incomprehensibility of their respective faiths. They not only admit, but glory in the admission, that unassisted reason cannot fathom the mysteries which shroud their gods. By unassisted reason, christians mean faithless reason, or reason without that peculiar, and indescribable species of grace which they tell us their Almighty Being vouchsafes to his elect, upon the principle of having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardening whom he will harden. But is not all this a wide departure from that philosophy of induction which priests, and philosophers with the spirits of priests, are constrained to admit the soundness of, in all questions relating to moral and physical science, though they lay it aside as if it were a contaminated garment, when the question of religion is brought upon the carpet? In thus acting, they doubtless display much professional prudence, for the probability is, that were religion brought to the severe test of experience and fact, it would be instantly annihilated. Christians themselves, when hard pushed, do not deny the fanciful imaginative basis of all religions. How can they deny it? Where are the facts which teach us this universe began to be? What experience have we, or could our forefathers have had, of a living Being, bearing no analogy whatever to anything within the sphere of our senses—of a Being who is said to have filled space before there was a universe—who called that universe into existence, and “it was so”—who by his will gave birth to the mighty mysteries we everywhere behold—by his will marshalled the planets in their respective orbits—in brief, by his will, caused all those effects which from time to time have dazzled and bewildered poor humanity—while itself the greatest of all imaginable conundrums, we are gravely told was unmade, had no beginning, is “without change or shadow of turning”—not body, but ruler and disposer of all bodies—not material, yet something, the author of everything except evil, which, in some inexplicable manner, created itself—and, to sum up all in one grand absurdity, we are told, and expected to believe, that the God about whom so much is clearly known, is altogether incomprehensible. Surely, “there is something more in all this than RATIONAL, if philosophy could find it out.”

Theists, to whom, as shown in the former paper, we are indebted for all that has been written or spoken about one only God, the creator and supreme ruler of the universe, are often greatly puzzled to grope a way through their own extraordinary labyrinth of logic. Sometimes they seem driven to the very brink of despair, when their faith, like a treacherous reed, not only basely fails, but cruelly wounds the hand that rests upon it, for reason they dare not wholly trust. They use it, it is true, but then it is suspiciously and sparingly; much in the same spirit, and for similar reasons, that sick men fly to physics, and the worn debauchee to his crutches. Theists, by way of apology for the inconsistencies they practice, and follies they perpetrate, plead the mysteries of nature. But the apology is most awkward; for, if nature be a mystery, which few doubt, it furnishes the best of reasons why all men should speak of it with diffidence. So far, however, are theists from treating tenderly those mysteries, or searching for a solution of nature's riddle, in a spirit of modesty, candour, and diffidence, they almost invariably display a dogmatic, insolent, self-sufficient spirit. Wordsworth recommends that we

Look on nature with a humble heart,  
Self-questioned where we cannot understand,  
And with a superstitious eye of love.

Now, if by superstitious eye of love—the poet meant an eye that loves to search for hidden and forbidden truths, I agree that, with such an eye, we all should look on nature, because it is in nature alone truth can be found—but if he meant that we should look on nature in any other spirit, or any other sense, I differ from him. We have had more than enough of what crazy rhymers call looking through nature up to nature's God, a nature's something not very well understood. This is precisely what theists do; nature is not sufficient for them. In the humbleness of their hearts they have no doubt whatever that nature is a mere piece of pagantry—a kind of panoramic view—designed, executed, and placed before their “eyes of love,” by the great scene-shifter, architect, and painter of the universe. This material world is looked upon, by such eyes, as a thing of nought; its glories contemptible, its pleasures vanities, its pains very

proper preparatives for a state of exquisite and immortal bliss in some other world—palpable enough to the superstitious, if not the rational eye—a world that is to be, I am told, after “heaven” depart, as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place. When all this comes to pass, no doubt those who are alive to see, will look most superstitiously, if not lovingly, astonished. It is, however, but just to allow that christian theists are not uniformly confident, or equally confident, as to their knowledge of “hidden things” at all times. By fits and starts they are extremely sceptical; so sceptical as to certify and satisfy themselves that they only know they know nothing—nay, sometimes, when the modest fit is on them, like the disciples of Pyrrho, they have very serious doubts, whether they do or do not know that they only know they know nothing. The famous Pascal penned the following :

I hardly know who has sent me into the world. Nor know I what the world is or what I am myself. I know not what my body is, what my senses are, or what my soul is. This very part of me which thinks what I speak, which reflects upon itself and upon every thing around me, is yet as ignorant of itself as it is of every thing else. I behold these frightful spaces of the universe with which I am encompassed, and feel myself confined to one little portion of the vast extent, without understanding why I am placed in this part of it rather than any other; or why the short period of time that was allotted me to live was assigned to me at this particular point, rather than at any other of the whole eternity which was before me, or of that which was to come after me, I see nothing but infinities on all sides, which swallow me up like an atom, or transform me to a shadow, which endures but a single instant, and is never to return. All that I know is, that I must die shortly, but this very death from which I cannot escape, is the thing of which I am most ignorant. As I know not from whence I came, so I know not whither I am going; only this I know, that at my departure out of the world, I must either be for ever annihilated, or fall into the hands of an incensed God, without being able to decide which of the two conditions will be my everlasting portion.

When Pascal penned the above paragraph, his thoughts must surely have been in a fluctuating and most disagreeable state; playing a kind of see-saw game—now up, now down,—in a “perpetual virtual” oscillation between a sense of knowing nothing and knowing everything. He is a most admirable specimen of a sceptically dogmatic christian theist. After helping us to a long and really frightful catalogue of his ignorances, he winds up the whole with declaring his certain knowledge of the most uncertain kind of two-fold proposition that, perhaps, ever was submitted to human reason. Poor Pascal! religion made sad havoc with thy frame. Who, save a religionist, would, in one and the same paragraph, tell us he hardly knew who sent him into the world, nor knew what the world was, what he himself was, or what anybody else was; and yet knew “excellent well,” that he must go out of the universe, some day, and then must either “be for ever annihilated, or fall into the hands of an incensed God.” As to his terrible dread (for terrible it must needs have been) of falling into the hands of an incensed Deity, I shall, at this stage of my investigations, say nothing more, than the man who can, for one instant, believe a God who created, and controls by his power this universe, can be *incensed* by our antics, or the antics of any other creatures crawling upon the surface of our planet—I say the man who can believe so monstrous a proposition, must be mad :

Prezented by disease or woe,  
To that worst pitch of all that wears a reasoning show.

Such a man might be expected to assure himself there was no halting place for human dust, between the wrath of an angry God and utter annihilation; but who, save a lunatic, ever seriously talked about the utter destruction of a single atom. Unless theists have a mode of thinking, and ideas complex and simple, peculiar to themselves, they never yet conceived the annihilation of anything, from suns to dew-drops. The forms of body are constantly changing; the matter of or from which those bodies are composed reason cannot even conceive the absence of, and pronounces to be eternal. Even Rousseau, who, if not a christian, strongly desired to be thought one, candidly admits that the absence of matter, or, what amounts to the same, its annihilation, is totally repugnant to reason. His reflections relative to this interesting topic, are so profound and curious, and to my present purpose, as to justify me in quoting the following choice sample :

There are two modes of conceiving the origin of things, to wit, either in two diverse causes, the one living, and the other dead; the one moving, and the other moved; the one active, and the other passive; the one efficient, and the other instrumental; or in one only cause which draws from itself alone, all that which is, and all that which is done. Each of these two sentiments, debated by metaphysicians for so many ages, has not become any the more credible to human reason; and if the eternal and ne-

cessary existence of matter, has for us its difficulties, its creation has no less, since so many men and philosophers, who through all time have debated upon the subject, have all unanimously rejected the idea, that creation was possible, except perhaps a very small number, who appeared to have sincerely submitted their reason to authority, the sincerity of which motives of interest, of safety, or repose, render very suspicious, and of which it will always be impossible to assure ourselves so long as men risk anything by speaking truth.

It will probably occur to many readers of this article, that if reason cannot *master* a subject, reason should not *meddle* with it; but such an opinion is far more plausible than sound; as, however, it is an opinion very generally entertained, I will now attempt to show, with all practicable brevity, why it is useful to discuss such subjects; why, for example, it is useful for studious searchers after truth to aim at satisfying themselves by perseverance and research, as to the comparative rationality of theism and atheism.

Just before leaving Bristol gaol, the chaplain presented me a neat copy of “Wilson’s Evidences of Christianity,” expressing, at the same time, his earnest desire that I would study and profit by it. I promised to do so, and kept my word. I have studd, and hope have profited by it. But it is not a little curious that this book of Mr. Wilson’s furnishes very explicit and, I think, decisive evidence as to the economy of that plan of study I propose for those who search after wisdom by the shortest roads. At page 17 of his introductory lecture to the course on christianity’s evidences, I find the following :

I shall take for granted in my argument the Being of a God, and those other truths of natural religion which the deist is so ready to grant, and which he boasts of as all-sufficient for the guidance and happiness of mankind. I assume therefore throughout these lectures, the existence of one Supreme, and infinitely glorious Being, who is to be worshipped and obeyed by man, to whom virtue is pleasing, and vice hateful, and who will reward the good and punish the wicked, in a future world.

Again, at page 21, the reverend lecturer thus proceeds :

Let me further remind you, that since it is allowed by our opponents that there is a God (for with the atheist I am not arguing) the duty of prayer to him, on entering upon this argument must be of paramount obligation.

Now, it seems plain enough, that those opponents of christianity—or Mr. Wilson—who allow there is a God; who, like him, take for granted the existence of the Supreme and infinitely glorious Being, will be quite satisfied with such a commencement of his evidences; but, then, there are others not so easily satisfied; who, in short, have not jumped to Mr. Wilson’s conclusion, as to an unnatural being’s existence, and very properly desire to see that fundamental question settled, before entering upon the study of others, not only secondary, but which positively derive all their interest and their chief support from the supposition that there is a God. It is true Mr. Wilson expressly states, “with the atheist I am not arguing, but only with the deists, who,” he adds, “are generally so ready to grant not only the being of a God, but certain other truths of natural religion.” So far there is no deceit in the book; but it becomes a serious question, whether a man who does not allow the rationality of belief in a God, would deem it worth his while to wade through two volumes of closely printed matter, every argument of which rests upon an assumption he cannot admit; and, as regards those individuals who have not fully, or perhaps at all, considered the arguments for and against God’s existence; it become a still more serious question, whether they would not save their leisure and spare their brains, by knowing what to think upon that subject, before plunging into a wilderness of details, out of which the chances are as a thousand to one, they never will be able thoroughly to extricate themselves, without paying the penalty of a seriously damaged intellect.

It is too much the practice of theologians to treat atheistical opinions cavalierly. No opinions should be so treated. The Rev. Mr. Wilson seemingly considers the holders of such opinions as opponents either too contemptible, or too formidable to be attacked.

The Rev. Mr. Faber, in his book entitled “Difficulties of Infidelity,” pursues a precisely similar course. Deists he disposes of in a masterly, if not convincing style; but, with respect to the being of a God, he conceives any one who can doubt that is too *brutish* to waste ink upon. So those who fortunately, or unfortunately, are incredulous upon that least clear of all points, including the mathematical, can get nothing save cuffs from Mr. Faber—no reason whatever showing the unsoundness of atheistical opinions, save the solitary *ipse dixit* “they are brutish”—if an *ipse dixit* may be called a reason. Again, the question arises—what shall it profit



the anti-supernaturalist to read the "Difficulties of Infidelity"—and what can it profit the unexperienced to read a book, which thus disposes of the only opinions that religionists have cause to dread.

Bishop Butler wrote a book on what he called "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed," where, as in the cases already adduced, it is taken for granted that

There is an intelligent author of nature, and natural governor of the world. . . . . Origin has with singular sagacity declared, that he who believes the scripture to have proceeded from him who is the author of nature, may well expect to find the same difficulties in it, as are found in the constitution of nature. And, in like way of reflection it may be added, that he who denies the scripture to have been from God, on account of these difficulties, may, for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him.

Were it necessary I should multiply instances of this kind, I could do so *ad infinitum*; but fortunately it is not necessary. It will suffice, I fancy, for my present argument, to state generally, that at least nine-tenths of theological books are of no use whatever to the atheist, inasmuch as they slide over, or take for granted, the only question he (the atheist) thinks it worth while to discuss; and, as to the multitude of investigators, who have not at all considered it, who, either from lack of opportunity, or absence of inclination, have no settled opinions as to the presumed existence, or non-existence of God, they never can largely benefit by labours the most persevering, or otherwise well-directed, for the obvious reason, that in their researches, they proceed upon no well-defined principle, theologic or anti-theologic, theistic or atheistic.

The man who, from fear or incapacity, fails thoroughly to examine and determine upon the principles of religion, before entering upon the study of its details, in my judgement, loses precious time, and

Finds no end, in wandering mazes lost.

The whole end and aim of religion, said Law, in his third letter to Bishop Hoadley, is to recommend us to the favour of God. All our most eminent theologians have shown, by their writings, they fully agree in opinion with Mr. Law as to religious end and aim. Let any one who doubts this statement peruse the works of Hooker, South, Leslie, or Horne. Let him study the best catholic, as well as protestant or dissenting divines, and the conclusion is inevitable, that their most laboured arguments have no validity whatever, if belief in a God be disturbed. Upon that belief they all rest—and with that belief they must stand or fall. Need I say another word as to the absolute necessity of thoroughly investigating that question of questions, before we proceed to the discussion of others of mere detail, having no relation to any principle whatever?

## REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLE AND REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE predicted, from the Saint Helena rock, that in less than twenty years Europe would be cossack or republican. More than twenty years have rolled away since that prediction was uttered, yet Europe is neither cossack nor republican—so that we must needs add the name of Napoleon to the very long roll of false political prophets. Europe is *not* cossack, and most certainly *not* republican—nay more, it is not likely to become either for at least another twenty years. England has nothing to dread from the "Russian Bear;" and it is only from Russia that England, in common with the rest of Europe, can expect an influx of cossackism. As to republicanism, it is just now at a fearful discount in Europe. The fifty-six millions of Russians know nothing about republicanism; and, of course, care nothing about it. They have yet to be taught—or themselves gather from bitter experience—the principles of republicanism. Austria, with its Italian, Swiss, and other dependencies, is pressed down by the weight of a leaden, energy-withering despotism. The Ottoman empire seems upon the eve of dissolution. It exists, as it has long existed, upon sufferance of the rival power of Russia, Austria, England, and France. These powers would break up the Ottoman empire to-morrow, if they could but agree as to the division of the spoil. Mr. Shiell said, ten years ago, in the House of Commons, that "the eagles of Russia were on the towers of Varna, and winging their flight to the spires of Constantinople." If the honourable member spoke truly, the said eagles are very

dilatory birds, or they have been stopped on the passage. A more than ten years' flight ought to have carried them from the towers of Varna to the spires of Constantinople. The truth indeed is, they *have* been checked. Constantinople is safe for the present; the time has not yet come for the destruction of Turkey—would it were: mussulman despotism has lived too long; and may the day soon come when it, with every other despotism, may be swept from the earth. The Turkish people, like their fellow-slaves of Russia, are quite innocent of republican principles, and without even the desire of liberty. They kiss the fetters by which they are bound, and the rods by which they are scourged. Turkish pashas, like Persian satraps, often try their scimitars' edge, and their own dexterity, by striking off the heads of those who have the honour to hold the stirrups while they mount to the saddle. Who would look in *such* countries for the spirit of republicanism? Turn we to France—"republican France"—and what an odious sight do we behold! A citizen king surrounded by despotie—not republican—institutions; a king, who owed his elevation to a revolution the most glorious the world's annals record, conceived by republican heads, and achieved by republican arms, trampling down, with iron heel, every vestige of political liberty.

What a sight to see, is that of a nation of republicans governed by a despot: but, in truth, the people of France are not republicans—they only *think* they are so. If but a bare majority of that extraordinary, and much abused people, understood the principles, or had imbibed the true spirit of republicanism, Louis Phillip would never have mounted the throne of France; or, being there, would speedily have been hurled from it. Monarchy cannot last long in France. The unwieldy, blood-cemented dynasty of Louis Phillip must soon topple down; and with it, I am persuaded, will fall, never again to rear its hated front, monarchy in France. When that event takes place, there will be hope for England; but there does not seem the slightest probability of England becoming a republic, while France is governed upon monarchical principles. France *has* taken the lead, and, I am of opinion, *will* take the lead in the good work of radically reforming—or, what is often much better, utterly annihilating crazy and most mischievous political institutions. The republicans of England are bewildered by a multiplicity of objects, and exhaust themselves in abortive efforts to realise what cannot *now* be realised. Their enemies scatter them, as chaff is scattered by the wind. Montesquieu, in his "Spirit of Laws," declared a republic could only be founded upon virtue. Such is my idea of a republic. It is of no consequence to the question, whether a republic be formed upon the socialist or any other model—it must have virtue for its basis. Virtue, in its brightest and purest sense, can only result from a well cultivated understanding. The virtue of ignorance is not to be relied on; it is always in danger from "the shot of accident or the dart of chance." The virtue that is not founded upon knowledge is not worthy the name of virtue. In this sense knowledge is indeed *power*, as without it we are nothing; with it we are everything. The founders of states, and those who have most wished to benefit their species, have seldom failed to understand the futility of establishing the *form* without the *spirit* of republican government. When the first Brutus dethroned Tarquin, Rome panted after virtue. Then it was found useful and practicable to adopt the republican form of government. At that period every plebeian was imbued with the genuine spirit of republicanism—but when the second Brutus struck down Cæsar, the Roman people were too corrupt to be lovers of freedom. The republican spirit was extinct, and Rome fell under the lash of a despotism which paved the way to all the horrors of fiercest anarchy. I am of opinion that England is, at this moment, as little prepared to appreciate republican principles, or establish republican government, as was Rome after the death of Antony. The people of England are gulled by priests and corrupted by statesmen. The work of delusion goes bravely on.

My own conviction is, that no class of Englishmen, as a *class*, are prepared freely to allow the expression of opinions hostile to their own. Until all classes of Englishmen are prepared to do this, they will fail to be politically honest; they will assuredly fail to establish a purely republican government, as such a government can rest on nothing save VIRTUE.

# THE INQUESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

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WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

LETTER II.

YOUR grace is aware, that in my former letter, I endeavoured to explain *why* no sound christian can admit the allegorical interpretation of Genesis, I showed that to allegorise the first chapters of Genesis, is to allegorise the fundamental of christianity—in other words—to destroy it. In this view of the allegorising mania, with which so many learned christians, some of the most pious of the early fathers inclusive, were afflicted, I fully expect your grace will coincide. Indeed, you *must*, as head of a christian church, whose chief doctrines rest upon the *literal* truth of Genesis, be the sincere opponent of any other than a *literal* interpretation. To suppose that your grace does not read the first chapter of Genesis as a history of events that really occurred—to suppose that you considered *fabulous* the tale about Adam, Eve, talking serpent, and the fall—to suppose, in short, that you don't receive as true the very ground-work of that religion you are employed by the state to watch over and expound, is to suppose your grace the vilest of hypocrites, which I am by no means prepared to do.

But now comes the "tug of war" between your grace and me, as my present conviction is, that the *literal* reading of the first chapters in Genesis, involves no fewer, or no less fatal difficulties, than the *allegorical* or *figurative*. I have shown in my former letter, that a figurative garden of Eden, would lead us to infer a figurative Mount Calvary, a figurative Adam, a figurative Christ, a figurative plucking of the apple, a figurative crucifixion, &c. This has been shown, and no doubt your grace will be quite willing to set aside all such figurative notions, and take your stand upon the plain literal reading. Here, however, your grace will pardon me saying, the difficulties seem insurmountable. Of course, I mean insurmountable to an investigator who follows where reason guides, and stops where reason stops. Such an investigator your grace knows I profess myself to be—who has not a grain of faith in anything obviously unreasonable, not faith as a mustard seed, in "holy legends or religious tales," therefore cannot "remove mountains," or by any mere act of volition believe to be true what appears to reason incredible, if not positively false.

Your grace, as a scholar and a man of candour, will, I hope, bear with me, while I candidly state some few of the chief difficulties which are inseparable from a literal reading of the chapters referred to. The first line of the first chapter runs thus: "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*"

Now, has your grace, or has any man, a distinct idea of an absolute beginning? We all know that trees begin to grow, that men begin to exist—but we also know that trees, men, and all other natural productions, always existed in some form—for we cannot conceive the annihilation of an atom. In a letter to his friend Mr. Gildon, the noted Charles

Blount said, "As nature cannot create, by making something out of nothing, so neither can it annihilate, by turning something into nothing—whence it consequently follows, as there is no accession, so there is no diminution in the universe, no more than in the alphabet, by the infinite combination and transposition of letters, or in the wax, by the alteration of the seal stamped upon it."

The value of this opinion it is for your grace to judge of. It may be, however, that the opinion of a deist upon this curious question will not weigh so advantageously with you, as that of a man esteemed more orthodox. Perhaps, therefore, the following from Solomon will meet with a better reception,\* "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever."

If, by earth, Solomon meant matter, and what else could he mean? I entirely coincide in the opinion, or rather allow the dictum—nor can I think your grace will run full tilt against the authority of him, whom Christians, no less than Jews, esteem the wisest of men. And yet it puzzles me to understand how your grace can suppose, or admit the earth abideth for ever, when it is contended by that very church of which you are the acknowledged head, that there was a *beginning*, and will be an *end* of all things. It is true that, in the liturgy, our world is spoken of as without end:—"As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." But, at the risk of offending your grace, I must say, that such language, from the lips of christian pastors, is highly reprehensible. How inconsistent is it in christians to maintain there was an absolute beginning, while they refuse to allow an end. What is perhaps more extraordinary, and even less defensible is, that while in the liturgy they speak of the world as without end, they are continually preaching about the utter destruction of this world, and entering upon the joys of another. So far back as the time when Christ is presumed to have existed there was much talk about the *end* of all things being at hand. It was the almost universal opinion of that age, that "old things will pass away, and all become new;" nor by *things* were meant opinions, customs, or governments merely, but the universal fabric. Your grace will, I am sure, not attempt to deny that christians have believed, and do now believe, that the universe was made from nothing about six thousand years ago, and will return to nothing at some period or other. The short is, they have believed, and do now believe, that "In the *beginning* God created the heavens and the earth, and in the *end* will annihilate them."

Ocellus Lucanus, a very ancient and learned author, of whom Moses is supposed by some christians to have been a contemporary, thus wrote:

My opinion is, that the universe admitteth neither generation nor corruption, for it ever was and ever shall be; inasmuch as if 'twere subject to time, it would not yet continue. For if any man should conceive it to have been made, he would not be able to find into what it should be corrupted or dissolved; since that out of which it was made is *before* the universe, as that into which it shall be corrupted will be after the universe. Besides, the universe being made, is made together with all things, and being corrupted, is corrupted together with all things, which is impossible. So that the universe is without beginning and ending.

Eccles. i. 4.



Such, your grace, is *my* opinion. I cannot but think with Ocellus Lucanus that "the *universe* is without beginning and without ending;" all changes being changes relatively to us, not to the whole, as all alterations are alterations of form, not of being. I do not think man, as man, always existed, any more than I think Hampshire oaks always existed as Hampshire oaks; but my reason is satisfied that men and oaks always existed in some form or other.

There's not an atom of our earth  
But once was living man,  
Nor the minutest drop of rain,  
That hangs in the thinnest cloud,  
But flowed in human veins.

So sung perhaps the most pure and sublimely poetic of all our poets; and if the lines be not strictly true, they are highly suggestive of what is. They suggest the idea so well put into words by Charles Blount, in the letter to which I have already called your grace's attention. These words are worth quoting, not so much for your grace's edification as that of the general reader:

Now, as for the forms of natural bodies, no sooner doth any one abandon the matter it informed, but another steps instantly into the place thereof; no sooner hath one acted his part and is tired, but another comes presently forth upon the stage, though it might be in a different shape, and so act a different part; so that no portion of matter at any time can be altogether void and empty, but, like Vertumnus or Proteus, it turns itself into a thousand shapes, and is always supplied and furnished with one form or another, there being in nature nothing but circulation: "Ne res ad nihelum redigatur protinus omnes." (Lucretius, lib. 2.)

Ovid, Lucretius, indeed all the ancient poets, held precisely these opinions. It is superfluous to say so much upon matters no scholar can be ignorant of—but all are not scholars, nor has one reader in a million had the same opportunities or inducements as your grace to know what the ancients thought upon questions of religion and general policy. There are few indeed, even among the investigating classes of christian society, who are aware that nearly all the ancient philosophers and poets were either atheists or inclined to atheism. The writer of some letters to Sir Robert Peel on the education question, which appeared about three years ago in the "Times" newspaper, asserted that "all the experimental philosophers of Greece and Rome were atheists." The assertion was bold as startling—but I am not aware that any one has ventured to contradict it; and even your grace will, I doubt not, readily grant that those who denied a *beginning* denied a *creation*, and in *effect* denied a *creator*, or *God*—for *God* could not have *created* the world if the world *never* was created. If there be an *unnatural Being* who created *nature*, he must have been before *nature*, that is, before the beginning of all things; but if it be denied there ever was a beginning of all things, is it not plain that such a denial implies the denial of a *God*? I should very much like your grace's opinion upon that point, as it is pivotal. All religion turns upon it—and until it be satisfactorily settled, belief in an unnatural Being cannot be satisfactorily settled. I am aware that it is unusual for persons in such an exalted position as your grace now occupies, to step down and meet, on the common field of investigation, the objections of sceptics. But I do trust your grace will set an excellent example, by using against the enemies of your creed and worship the weapons of reason, and not, as heretofore, the weapons of persecution—the legitimate arm of the spirit, not the "arm of flesh." My promise is given to become christian, the moment your grace or any other person succeeds in convincing my understanding that christianity is true. Whether it appear to me useful or not, if proved true, I will at once embrace it, because I am thoroughly convinced that what is true is useful. All men *say* as much, but it is very questionable whether all men *think* as much. The praises heaped upon truth are most extravagant. Truth is pronounced to be "the one thing wanting," "the basis of all excellence," it is to "set men free," and I really do not know what, according to these truth flatterers, it is not to do—but the individuals who thus extravagantly laud truth, mean truth as it is in them, their own little bit of truth—the christian, christian truth, the mohammedan, mohammedan truth, the brahmin, brahminical truth, and so with the rest. No one objects to truth in the least—not *the* truth, that is his own truth, he only wars, brave, generous man, with what other folks *call* truth, which he *knows* to be falsehood—that ought to be put down by argument, if practicable, but if argument fail, by the sword of the civil magistrate. Such, your grace, is the world's liberality and consistency,

but let me entreat you, most reverend sir, to prove by your acts, that it is not only the truth you really think so, or find it expedient to call by that name, you are prepared to allow the free expression of, but every other man's truth, or what he deems such. It is not now to be endured, that anything human, be it in the shape of priest or layman, prince or peasant, should dictate to his fellows either what they are to think or how they shall express their thoughts respecting any purely speculative questions. Your grace is *paid* and *honoured* by the state for the promulgation of your opinions. I am neither paid nor honoured for promulgating mine. My *pay* for such state service is a severe cuffing—my *honour* comes in the equivocal shape of popular and state persecution. I do not envy your grace your position or your wealth—I envy no man who has a direct and enormous interest in preventing men changing their opinions, whatever reasons they may see for doing so. I should be heartily ashamed and most unhappy were I compelled to act the drag on the wheel of knowledge. All Asia's riches could not thoroughly reconcile me to such a degraded grandeur.

These observations are not intended offensively to your grace. No, I do not believe you think you are a drag on the wheel of knowledge and improvement, and it is therefore I call upon you to aid me in my search after truth. I call upon you to offer a SOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY'S DIFFICULTIES, which, week by week, it is my intention to place before you. If they can be solved they ought to be solved, and you are, I conceive, the fittest individual to offer the solution. I candidly tell your grace, that I stop at the beginning—a beginning being, philosophically considered, an absolute impossibility. I tell your grace, that if that impossibility cannot be believed, the existence of a creator of the heavens and the earth cannot be credited. I moreover tell your grace, that upon the credibility of some unnatural Being's existence—an unnatural Being, too, who out of nothing called the universe a few thousand years ago—hangs the whole fabric of christianity. Your grace must, if you would save your religion, assert and *prove* that reason can compass the idea of a universal beginning, because failing such proof, you will be constrained to admit that reason cannot compass the idea of a *God*, and as without some idea of a *God* there can be no christian, or any other, religion, the admission will include the denial of the truth of christianity.

The only way in which it seems to me your grace can *evade* this blow, is by declaring, with Bishop Van Mildert, that "Reason is not competent to judge of the wisdom and fitness of what is revealed." You may say, with that wise bishop, that "what god reveals must be consistent with rectitude and fitness, and that reason has henceforth nothing to do but to believe and to obey." But even though your grace should adopt this fallacious line of argument, none would be gainers save the enemies of christianity. For it will occur to every man capable of joining two ideas together, that if reason is not a competent judge of the wisdom and fitness of what is revealed; it must be a mere farce for any one not divinely inspired "to search the scriptures," with the view to judge of its contents; and what possible utility can arise from reading books, sacred or profane, if we fear to reason on their contents? Besides, it is reason and reason alone can determine what is or what is not revealed. How can we know a certain book to contain the revealed will of a *God*, without exercising our reason? No one doubts that "what *God* reveals must be consistent with rectitude and fitness," supposing by the word of *God* is meant an all-powerful and all-good Being—but the questions to be decided are, first, is there such a *God*? and, second, is the bible a revelation from him? Reason must begin by satisfying itself upon these disputed propositions, and when convinced there is such a *God*, and that he *has* revealed himself; it will, after such conviction, have nothing to do but to believe and obey—but *after* it must be. It must be evident to your grace, that if reason alone is competent to decide between the various so-called revelations, it is reason alone can decide whether it be "consistent with rectitude or fitness."

The famous Locke said, that he found every sect, as far as reason would help them, gladly use it, but when it failed them, they cried out, it is matter of *faith*, and above reason. As Locke found them, so I find them, and I dare be sworn your grace finds nothing in the shape of sect acting differently. But I hope you will not thus act. I sincerely hope, if I do not confidently expect, that your grace will set a brilliant example to all sects and all parties—that you will show the world you



are not afraid of reason—that you do not, from mere motives of convenience, use it today and abuse it tomorrow—that you are not a deceitful priest but an honest man, who at least thinks divine religion he is bound to strengthen and defend—in short, that you are a christian who believes that his religion has nothing to fear from the artillery of reason, and who acts consistently with that belief. But by way of returning from this short, though not, perhaps, unprofitable digression, I beg your grace seriously to consider whether you can reasonably defend the *literal* reading of only the first line of Genesis. Can you maintain, by arguments based on clear facts, that the universe *did begin to be*? Can you gravely enter the lists as champion of the incomprehensible doctrine, that out of nothing everything did come? If your grace prove hardy, and, allow me to add, reckless enough to throw down the gauntlet in such a cause, I promise immediately to pick it up. But surely you will never peril your reputation for learning and good sense upon the issue of such an encounter. Why every school-boy now knows, setting aside the question whether the universe ever began to be at all, that it could not have begun to be six thousand years ago. Your grace is aware that our chronologists will not allow the world to be quite six thousand years old. Eusebius is, I believe, the only exception. He calculated the universe to be a little above that age, but as I have just remarked, every school-boy now knows better—every child capable of trotting to school with “satchel on back,” would laugh till his little sides ached at such queer chronology. No, your grace, the six thousand year-old story wont do for this generation. The facts of geology forbid that the people of Europe should ever again receive as divine truth such bare-faced chronological fictions. There is, then, I conceive, no help for those who, like your grace, cling tightly to the literal reading of Genesis, than in stretching, without snapping, the six thousand years to as many millions or trillions. If the six thousand could be safely stretched to six trillions, why the cause of christianity would, without doubt, be served most handsomely—but, for my own part, I do not see how this is to be done, and at the same time the literal reading be preserved intact. Perhaps your grace will explain how this can be done, or if it cannot be done, how we are to deal with so great a difficulty.

A very clever writer of the seventeenth century,\* says of our orthodox chronology, that

It takes not in all nations, and if it did, the argument is weak, since there may have been histories of them which reached farther, though now lost. Or perhaps they kept no records, for the uncertainty of the Greek chronology before the Olympiads, shows us they came but late to a regular observation of time. And the Roman histories can give us no assurance or certainty when or by whom Rome was built. Livy tells us of Romulus and Remus—Sallust says the Trojans built it, and concludes it uncertain. As to the time, I know they are more positive, reckoning *ab urbe condita*, though I can't think there can be an absolute certainty of their computation, since that it was begun some years at least after its foundation.

Besides, to draw an argument from this, that because we have no history that exceeds six thousand years, therefore the world was not before, is all one as if I should say, that because the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations were not known till the time of the Roman emperors, therefore they were not in being before.

But since our correspondence with China, we have found they have records and histories of four or six thousand years date before the creation of the world; and who knows but some other nations may be found out hereafter, that may go farther, and so on. Nay, the Chinese themselves, in a traditional account, tell us that the posterity of Panzou and Panzou inhabited the earth nine millions of years ago. The Brahmins of Guzarat said, in 1639, that there had past three hundred and twenty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-nine ages, each age consisting of a number of years, and if I mistake not, centuries. Nay, the Egyptians, in the time of their king Amasis, contemporary with Cyrus, had the records and stories of thirteen thousand years, and a succession of three hundred and thirty kings, which shows they were not lunary years.

I will not risk fatiguing your grace by any further extracts, especially as those here given are ample for my present purpose. Not being prepared to admit that the whole ever had a beginning—not deeming creation a possible thing—of course I as little agree with those who, like some Chinese and Brahmin priests, imagine the world had a beginning millions of years since, than I do with your grace, and all other orthodox christians, that the world began to be thousands of years ago. My position is, that the world or universe *never had a beginning at all*—or, if it had, we have no facts whereon to found such a conclusion.

I challenge your grace to produce facts which will justify me in believing the universe was “willed” out of naught, by naught, six thousand or six millions years ago. The challenge

is given in the most friendly spirit. May your grace see the wisdom of accepting it.

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

## POLITICAL CAJOLERY.

THOSE who are accustomed to watch the proceedings of leading politicians, can hardly have failed to observe their disposition to EXAGGERATE upon all topics, connected with the progress of their principles and party. Many very able, and, I think, well-meaning politicians, have come under my notice, who, in their private capacity would shrink from the commission of a dishonest act, or the statement of an untruth, yet hesitate not to serve “their glorious cause” by false speeches and dishonest practice. Hudibras says:

Women leave no stone unturned,  
In which the cause may be concerned.

Just so with these politicians referred to. In what concerns their *cause*, they are every inch women, leaving no stone unturned, the turning of which may serve it. Falsehoods the most abominable are told to serve the “glorious cause,” not merely without hesitation, but with prompt alacrity—and if detected, they fall back upon the ever-ready apology, “Oh, I said so to serve my party.” When at other times they are charged with holding back a truth that ought to be forthcoming, they exclaim, in a tone oscillating between the expostulatory and indignant—“Why, you would not have me say anything that would injure my party, would you?” Politicians of this crowded school, as *public men*, know nothing about qualms of conscience. They are labouring in the reform vineyard, all for the good of society—and that fact reconciles them to the doing much that, under any other circumstances, they would deem it villainous even to think of. Falsehood spoken, or dishonestly practised, for no other than pre-eminent excellent purposes, are placed in the long catalogue of *white lies* and *vices* of the same pure complexion. Like the Jesuits in days of yore, these clever party politicians, as party politicians, act upon the principle of compassing good ends by good means, when good means may be more conveniently used than bad means. The Jesuits taught that the end, if passing excellent, justified means, however atrocious—and it is but fair to allow, that they seldom failed to practice what they preached. It is far otherwise with the ablest and most popular of our politicians, who, with some few admirable exceptions, denounce jesuitry, while they act like Jesuits. Necessity, the tyrant's plea for his tyranny, is found by politicians of this stamp, a no less convenient plea for their duplicity. Necessity has been called a “hard mother,” but methinks these children of hers must find her a useful, if not a tender parent, seeing that she supplies them with an everlasting apology for all their *peccadilloes*. But the apology is, at best, a bad one, and is only allowed to pass muster upon an infinitude of occasions, because custom lends its sanction to iniquity. There are men who think, and I am one of them, that the politician who lends himself to delusion and imposture for the attainment of *any end*, stands upon ground very little, if at all higher, than the pickpocket, who empties a purse for an end *he* deems desirable—and I am persuaded that if we measure human conduct by the rule of utility, it will be found that far more mischief has been produced, and good prevented, by white lying politicians, than by pickpockets. Godwin tells us in his “Inquirer,” that

The affairs of man in society are not of so simple a texture that they require only common talents to guide them. Tyranny grows up by a kind of necessity of nature, oppression discovers itself, fraud, violence, murder, and a thousand other evils follow in the rear. These cannot be extirpated without great discernment and great energies. Men of genius must rise up, to show their brethren that these evils, though familiar, are not, therefore the less dreadful—to analyse the machine of human society—to demonstrate how the parts are connected—together—to explain the immense chain of events and consequences—to point out the defects and the remedy.

Agreeing with Godwin, that men of genius are needed to expose the abominations of present society, and point the way to a better, nothing would rejoice me more than to see them, like the armed heroes of Cadmus, start from “virgin mud” by the score. But the men of genius I care to see

\* Charles Gildon. See Letter to Dr. R. B., “Of a God.”



start up, must also be men of honesty—men of integrity, as well as talent—for all experience proves that there are no greater enemies to human improvement than sham reformers, and humbug politicians, with splendid abilities and lax morality. No, no; it is not so much men of genius we need, as men of integrity. Liberty is at this moment writhing under the wounds inflicted upon it by men of rare talents—but, alas! destitute of common honesty. Since the days of Horne Tooke, Hardy, and Cartwright, political integrity seems to have suffered an almost total eclipse, and though it would be easy to name at least a dozen men of genius, who have since that time stood before the world in the character of radical reformers, I could not mention *two* who ever attempted to pursue a perfectly honest and consistent course. During the last twelve or twenty years, there has been little else in connection with political action, than *charlatanerie* and disgusting deception. The people have been hood-winked, as well by their leaders as by their tyrants—perhaps more effectually and mischievously so by the former than by the latter. It must be confessed that since the dawn of thought in this country, the chief politicians, liberal and illiberal, have carried on a system of political cajolery, that must and shall be swept away. The disastrous effects of that system are everywhere manifest, they are distinctly visible among every section of politicians.

Socialists, chartists, and other radical sections of society, are, almost to a man, republican in principle. They are only waiting a fit opportunity to beneficially make the principle a *fact*. But there is no class of political reformers in the country that dares be true to itself. The socialist means republicanism; but contents himself to cry out for parallelograms. The chartist cries out for the charter; but means a republic. Nor is there, perhaps, to be met with among any party of radically reforming politicians, a single individual, who is not convinced that, some day or other, Europe will be republican—that is, *will be governed by all for the greatest good of all*. The republicans of France seem more united, more energetic, and more determined, than the republicans of England. Even what may be termed their *instinctive* action, is generally more telling and useful, than our complicated and highly artificial policy. Temperament has much to do with this, no doubt: the phlegmatic Englishman knows more than he acts, while the sanguine Frenchman acts more than he knows. But, though Englishmen know more than they act, in the gross—and of Englishmen in the gross I write—they are reckless, because ignorant, of principles. They are so completely under the thumb of priests, that I fear little in the shape of sound, substantial reform, can be expected from the present generation. It is not merely that they are kept down by priests—if it were only so, one might have some hope of their getting up—but they positively insist upon being kept down, as though they had a taste for grovelling in the dirt, with the foot of oppression upon their necks. Even those who love truth—who stand erect and boldly assert the dignity of their nature, are still in the thrall; still do they cling to fallacies—fallacies, too, which lie at the root of all political mischief. I will illustrate my meaning by reference to an article in the “New Moral World,” of Saturday, March 25, 1843, headed “Progress of Social Reform in America.” The writer of the article gives in full the letter of Mr. J. A. Collins, “the well known anti-slavery advocate.” The letter in question, from a gentleman who is not only a “well known anti-slavery advocate,” but who is generally considered by the socialists, as one of the most able and energetic of their American friends; furnishes so forcible an illustration of the very great fallacies propounded as unquestionable truths by republicans who take the lead in reforming the world, that I cannot pass it over. We are told, for example, in this letter, that “the people are convinced of the necessity of a complete re-organisation of society.” Now *this is untrue*. The people are not convinced, either in the United States or in this country, as to the expediency or necessity of a complete re-organisation of society. If they were, society would be immediately re-organised. Action flows from opinion; and men, individually or collectively, generally act upon their convictions, when there are no insuperable obstacles lying in the way of such action. It is a mistake to suppose that the people of any nation are ripe for a really radical reform, or at all prepared to pull old society to pieces, and construct it anew. It is a mistake to suppose that there is, anywhere, a *national* desire to overthrow, or set aside, existing institutions, and establish a republic upon

social principles. Most heartily do I wish the desire *did* exist; but every man whose eyes are open, and sense not shut, must see there is no where to be found such *national* desire. I may be told that it is politic to say so much, even if it be not quite true; but I am blind enough *not* to see the policy of falsehood. Falsehood is a monster that should be warred with by every man, no matter what special form it may assume, or what end it may be attempting to compass. I do not say Mr. Collins, in penning such a statement, *thought* it false; but I know—as every one not crazed by a strong desire to socialise the world must know—that it is a statement totally false. Again, I am told, in this letter, that “the individual comes into the world a joint-proprietor of all that is in it, equal in his possessions to every human being, and yet inherits poverty, ignorance, and infamy, or abundance, intelligence, and honour, according to the factitious and impious notions of society.” Now this is surely rare reasoning. I always thought individuals came naked into the world: “naked as he or she was born,” has become a proverb amongst us; but now if Mr. Collins may be credited, we are joint-proprietors of all that is in the world the precise moment we set our heads into it; and yet, though we fall into such a magnificent proprietorship, before we know anything about property, though we all were equal in possession, before the idea of possession ever flashed into our craniums, yet, strangely enough, according to this most strange doctrine, a very considerable number inherit naught save poverty, ignorance, and infamy. This nonsense about coming into the world a joint-proprietor, &c., reminds me of Paine’s celebrated sentence: “They tell me God made rich and poor, but it is false; he made man and woman, and gave them the earth for an inheritance”—perhaps the most foolish sentence that great man ever wrote. But it is evident Mr. Collins thinks far otherwise, for he talks about “the soil, the inalienable and common birth-right of all, which has been monopolised by individuals and governments.” Now it is true that the soil has been monopolised by individuals and governments; but it is ridiculous to talk about inalienable and common birth-rights, seeing *there are no such birth-rights*. Our birth-rights—if that term must be used—are just the rights chance throws in our way. If born in a palace, we shall, most likely, have a right to luxury and fortune’s choicest gifts. If a hovel be our second dwelling place, the chances are, that our rights will be few and valueless indeed. An inalienable right is a right that *cannot be taken away*; but whether infants have any such rights, in virtue of their birth, let the reader determine for himself. In another part of this letter we are assured that no “one can accumulate wealth, except at the expense of others; although to the superficial observer, it may be beneficial to all parties.” Here, again, is a monstrous error. The accumulation of wealth in one man’s hand does not, *necessarily*, cause poverty to others. Money is the sign of wealth. Under a well-regulated monetary system, money would follow wealth as its shadow—increasing or decreasing precisely as it increased or decreased. Now, where wealth greatly increases in any state, as it did formerly in the republican states of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, so long as there shall be neither home or foreign demand for as much or more than such wealth, individuals may accumulate vast masses thereof without the slightest injury to others. So much for Mr. Collins’s letter, which is full of *other truths*, very like those I have pointed out, and here I leave it; but in the preamble of a certain document, also from the pen of Mr. Collins, and appended to his letter in the “New Moral World,” there are a few words well worthy of our deepest attention; because they also are highly illustrative of that canting, unphilosophical spirit, I grieve to say, so generally displayed by the *elite* of republicans in England and America. These are the words—

Whereas it is most evident that it was the design of our Creator, that a man should be happy in this state of existence, &c.

Thus begins the preamble, and a pretty beginning it is for a philosophical republican. I can safely leave it to be disposed of by the reader, more especially as, in the last *Investigator*, under the head of “Chapter on the Creation and Design Questions,” the reader may find materials for thinking about “the design of our Creator,” rather more useful than those of Mr. J. A. Collins; and probably conclude that the people must outstrip such leaders in the acquirement of sound knowledge, with respect to religion and

politics, before a socialist republic can be firmly established. When Sir J. Easthope made his church-rate motion in the House of Commons, last session, many things were said to soothe the people, and make them believe much that is very equivocal. Sir Robert Inglis told the house that the church was "the poor man's church;" and if by poor man's church we are to understand the church *paid for by the poor*, why the saintly baronet was quite right; but, in any other sense, it would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to discover in what way the church benefits the poor. To be sure, the church parsons *advantage* the people by advising them to think as they tell them to think, say as they tell them to say, and pay as they tell them to pay; promising them, if they do as desired to do, the most intense delights in some other world, however miserable they may feel in this. Besides doing so much for the poor, they read the liturgy every Sunday, and some other odd days during the year, for such of them as are well dressed enough to drop in, and are by no means squeamish as to the language they hear. The "Times," a paper that never lies, informs us that much of the said liturgy is "disgustingly indecent," making even the parsons themselves—albeit unused to the blushing mood—crimson with shame while they read it. Verily that is an odd kind of "poor man's church," which wrings from the poor, in hard cash, some millions per annum, and helps them periodically, in return, to a moral assortment of "disgusting indecencies."

After Sir Robert Inglis had delivered himself of so doubtful a statement, Mr. Byng, the venerable member for Middlesex, gave birth to another no less doubtful. "The people of England," said he, "are ardent lovers of truth," a *fact* many will be inclined to dispute, thinking that

Between the saying and the fact,  
There is a very large tract.

The English people love truth, no doubt, as most other people do—when it happens to flatter their prejudices and strengthen their interests. *When truth is against man, he is against truth*, said Hobbes, a saying that applies, perhaps, with no less force to an Englishman than to any other man.

But thus it is the people are everywhere cajoled by politicians, who, sometimes ignorantly, and sometimes cunningly, grossly flatter, while they as grossly dupe them.

## RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

LORD ASHLEY moved in the House of Commons, February 28th: "That an humble address be presented to her majesty, praying that her majesty will be graciously pleased to take into her instant and serious consideration the best means of diffusing the benefits and blessings of a moral and religious education among the working classes of her people." I am happy to say the motion was carried unanimously. Not a voice was raised against it—not one honourable member ventured to breathe a single sentence against this really important motion. Sir James Graham said: "Late events were pregnant with solemn warning; the time was come when the religious and moral instructor must go forth; the destinies of this country were involved in the proper education of the rising generation." Now, as to the propriety of moralising the working classes of this country, there can, I presume, be but one opinion among good men; the propriety, however, of religionising them at the same time, or at all attempting to mix up morals with religion, is exceedingly doubtful. It is the opinion of many who have paid great attention to educational questions, that religion often spoils morality than aids or strengthens it. The late Jeremy Bentham's celebrated sentence: "Maximise morals—minimise religion," amply testifies *his* opinion as to the propriety of religionising the working or any other classes of society. There is no higher authority than Bentham upon educational questions. By common consent he has been placed first in the first rank of moral philosophers, notwithstanding his opinion that the less of religion and the more of morality the better. Lord Ashley affirmed in the course of his speech: "The safest of all proceedings to ensure the happiness of a nation, was the establishment of a sound and a religious system of education;" but unluckily for this hacknied affirmation, a religious system of education has hitherto been found

altogether incompatible with any sound principles or system whatever. A sound system of education is, indeed, desirable, but there can be nothing sound—nothing stable, in any religious system, for the obvious reason, that there are, properly speaking, no religious truths. In morals there is but one truth—in religion there are a million; and what is remarkable enough, no two of the million have any point of contact or agreement with each other or the rest. A sound system should surely be raised upon well ascertained facts. Now, morals so far as it is properly a science, deals with facts and realities only—fiction has no place in morals. Morality concerns human action—actions known and seen, whose effects are felt, and may be judged of; but where are the facts of religion?—where are the realities, the tangible things it brings to our knowledge?—and where is the religion in which fiction has no place? If morals deal with human action—if it have no other end or aim than human happiness—if a science of morals embrace, as it manifestly ought, all the facts that bear, however remotely, upon the interests of man, considered as an isolated individual, or as a member of society—of what utility is religion? *Cui bono?* What is the good of it? It deals with unhuman, or, as the phrase is, superhuman action; but what, in the name of common sense, can the human know of the superhuman?

The whole and sole object of religion, theologians themselves admit, is to recommend us to the favour of God; but I would put it to any one capable of entertaining a rational idea, whether it is wise in us to waste our precious moments in striving to recommend ourselves to the favour of a Being whose very existence is questioned, and whose worshippers themselves are constrained to admit that his ways are past finding out—in short, that they have no knowledge of him whatever? Religionists, when hard pushed for arguments, often triumphantly quote the admissions of certain quasi-sceptical writers in favour of religion, considered as a crutch of moral influence. The memorable words of Rousseau: "Philosophy can do nothing that religion cannot do better, while religion can do many things that philosophy cannot do at all," have been paraded by almost every theological writer of this country. Now, by way of offset to this satisfactory paragraph, I will quote another from the same Rousseau.\*

Suppose an individual were to cry aloud at midnight, "It is day;" he would at first be sneered and laughed at; but only allow to such individual time and means to form a sect—sooner or later he would gather about him partisans who, in the end, would prove that he spoke truth; for they would say, when he declared it was day, it was most undoubtedly day in some part of the earth; nothing being more certain than that fact. Others having established as unquestionably true that there is always in the air some particles of light, would sustain that, in another sense, quite different, it is very true, it is day at night. Provided some subtle people mix in the discussion, speedily the sun will be seen in full midlight. Some parties will not be thoroughly convinced and refuse to yield up their reason to the evidence advanced. Then there will be fierce debates, which presently degenerate, according to custom, into wars and cruelties. One party will call for explanation—the other wish for nothing of the kind; one party will desire to give the propositions a figurative interpretation—the other party insist upon their literal meaning. The one will say, he has declared at midnight that 'twas day, and it was night—the other will say, he has said at midnight 'twas day, and it was day. Each will tax with bad faith the contrary party—seeing in them mere obstinate heretics. In the end, they will fall to beating and massacring each other—rivers of blood will flow on all sides; and if the new sect be finally victorious, it will be clearly demonstrated that it is day at full midlight. This is an almost literally true history of all quarrels about religion.

I can easily believe it; indeed the copy furnished by the pen of this first-rate artist is so faithful that none who have seen the original can fail to recognise in the copy every one of its hideous features; and is it not sufficient to make reflecting men sceptical as to the necessity of religionising our population, when the fact is undeniable that there has been more quarrelling, more blood-shed, and cruelty about what certain people choose to call true religion, than about all other questions put together. There have been religious wars, as the Crusades—there have been religious massacres, as the never-to-be-forgotten St. Bartholomew's—there have been religious inquisitions, as the infernal ones of Spain and Portugal. But whoever heard of wars about morality—of crusades for any other purpose than bloody extermination? When did moralists butcher sixty or eighty thousand beings in one night, or set up inquisitions to terrify human consciences? When

\* Letter to M. De Beaumont.

Want of space precludes me from inserting it as it stands in the French original; but curious readers, who can read and have leisure to refer to the original, will find the above a faithful translation.



did moral discussions kindle the flames of civil war, or light the hellish faggot for execrating deaths? Never, never! It is religion that has ever been the stirrer up of strife! The world's religious debate cost the lives of at least six millions of men; and if it be objected that the people of England were not so well instructed in the times of Peter the Hermit as now, I beg such objectors to remember that the people were far more religious then than now. The people are unquestionably less religious and less brutal, because knowledge has found its way among them, than at any recorded period—but the great bulk of European population is still in a terrible state of ignorance. The state of our own population, as regards useful knowledge, is a positive scandal to the nation. Lord Ashley said, in the course of the speech by which he prefaced his motion, he called the attention of the house to the state of Wolverhampton, as reported by Mr. Horne, one of the sub-poor-law commissioners, from whose report it seems, that among all the children and young persons he examined, he found, with very few exceptions, their minds were as stunted as their bodies. The children and young persons possessed but little sense of moral duty towards their parents, and seemingly little affection for them. One child believed that Pontius Pilate and Goliath were apostles—another, fourteen or fifteen years of age, did not know how many two and two made. Again, the report on Willenhall declared that a lower condition of morals cannot be found. They sink some degrees (where that is possible) below the worst classes of children and young persons of—.

In North Wales, we are told, "not one collier boy in ten could read so as to comprehend the sense of what he read." In South Wales, many are almost in a state of barbarism—not one grown male or female in fifty can read! The noble lord then furnished the following replies from Yorkshire, Durham, Lancashire, North Staffordshire, as the replies of children who had been examined: "I never heard of France; I never heard of Scotland or Ireland; I do not know what America is." James Taylor, eleven years old, has never heard of God; but has heard men in the pit say "God damn them." A girl of eighteen years of age said: "I never heard of Christ at all." This was very common among children and young persons: "I never go to church or chapel;" and again: "I do not know what God is." From Halifax there was this evidence: "You have expressed surprise (said an employer) at Thomas Mitchell not having heard of God; I judge that there are very few colliers hereabouts that have."

Such are the evidences of utter moral destitution on the part of the labouring population of these realms. He is no friend to his race who does not bitterly lament that such, or even perhaps a worse, state of things should so long have been tolerated. But what can be thought of a church that has thus neglected the poor? Sir Robert Inglis said, during the last session of parliament, that "the church of England is the poor man's church." Now, if the honourable baronet meant that the poor pay for it, he is right; as, in that sense, the church of England is indeed the poor man's church; but if he meant us to infer, from his doubtful phrase, that the poor derive any benefit from the church, I point to Lord Ashley's speech as the best of answers. That speech proves, not only that the established clergy have failed to moralise the people, it establishes the fact that they have left the poorest classes of society—those who, if their instruction be of the slightest value, stand most in need of it—without even the elements of religion! Here is a church, the richest in the world—a church established by law, and upheld by law—a church whose priests are paid millions of the people's money to educate the people—a church that boasts its learning, its piety, its humanity—yet leaves those very people more debased and thoroughly ignorant than the beasts of the field! A national church should be a national school; and may the day swiftly come when the people of England will have sense enough to convert those dens of fanaticism, called churches, into schools of science—where the poorest, no less than the richest, may resort for purposes of rational edification. I tell Lord Ashley, and I tell the statesmen of this country, it is not churches or chapels the poor of this country need, but schools of science and festive halls—it is not religion, but morality, that can ever make them virtuous—it is not by hearing the words Christ or God pronounced, but by understanding the words of truth and soberness, they are to be morally benefited—it is not by praying to the priestly God, but by studying themselves that ever will

be excited within them those feelings of self-respect which are the never-failing sources of noble emotions and honourable acts. It is religion which sometimes represses and oftener stifles such feelings. Where self-respect is founded upon a just appreciation of moral truth, it needs no aid from religion. It is only the basest of those who wear the human form that need hell-fire to deter them from vice, and the bait of heavenly bliss to draw them on to virtue. Men never can be moral while governed on the principle of fear—it is the principle of love will regenerate our race, if regenerated at all. Yes, love is the true principle of morals, as fear is the true principle of religion. The noble Lord Ashley had the courage to say, in the face of parliament: "We call the working population improvident and immoral, and so they often are; but that improvidence and immorality are the results, in a great measure, of our neglect, and in not a little, our own example." Whereupon, certain honourable members cried "hear, hear," and certainly most apropos; for if ever truth fell from the lips of man, it did from those of Lord Ashley, when he declared the improvidence and immorality of the working population to be the results, in a great measure, of the neglect, and in not a little, the example of the middle and higher orders. Corruption flows from the church and the legislature to the people—not from the people to the church and the legislature. The people are denied the privilege of reasoning at all, or, what is infinitely worse, they are invited to reason after their reasoning faculties have been systematically debauched. Far better is absolute ignorance than positive error—far better that, like the boy Taylor, we should never have heard the word God, than, having heard it, to attach false or absurd ideas to it. The girl who declared: "I do not know what God is," was at least negatively wise—wise enough to know her own ignorance; while our priests and statesmen who, if they do not lie, are far better acquainted with the nature of God than the nature of man—so far from being wise enough to know their own ignorance, seem too doltish to perceive their own folly. If they instruct the poor at all, strangely enough, they begin by instructing them upon subjects they, the instructors, confess themselves to be utterly ignorant of. All religious instruction is of this character. Now, whether the working population of these realms can be largely benefitted by such sort of senseless instruction, or whether it is not calculated to injure rather than to benefit them, the reader can judge for himself. Better, far better, in my opinion, that the impoverished labourer of this country had no education at all, than such an education as our church and dissenting ministers would provide for him. That man is perhaps nearer the truth who has no idea at all, than he who has a false one. Ignorance is mischievousness enough, but error is incalculably more so—and therefore do I look with a kind of suspicious dread upon the educational schemes patronised by our legislators. The aristocratic principle triumphs in British legislation—and every one knows that the aristocratic principle is antagonistic to the principle and spirit of liberty. The church of England is a mere puppet of the aristocracy—a creature ever ready to do its bidding. The aristocracy supports the church, because the church perpetuates popular delusion—and the church clings to the aristocracy, because it cannot stand alone, having no firm resting place in the affections of the people. The aristocracy have no objection to the "lower orders being educated, if their friends the clergy determine the kind of education to be given." The aristocracy are no friends to dissent, as dissent breaks up that discipline without which the rabble cannot be kept in salutary awe of their superiors. But dissent has triumphed over the might of aristocracy, no better proof of which need be given than Sir James Graham's statement upon the occasion of Lord Ashley's motion, that "District schools were proposed to be established for the education of pauper children in the metropolis and large towns, under the superintendence of the established church, with provision for the instruction of dissenters by ministers of their own persuasions." So far well—but I am fully satisfied that neither church nor dissenting ministers will ever honestly employ the enormous means at their disposal to do aught save fanaticise, and, of course, demoralise the people. Abominable doctrines, said Rousseau, are those which lead to crime and generate fanatics. And what in this world can be more abominable, than reducing to system every kind of injustice and violence, and teaching that they flow from the clemency of God? Such, I maintain, are the doctrines, and such is the teaching of every denomination of priests.



## MORALS.

## II.

In the first *Investigator*, I promised to explain in this, *my* idea of metaphysics—considered as a science. I will now fulfil that promise, with as little circumlocution and useless wordiness as practicable.

Understanding by the term metaphysics, *the nature and workings\* of the mental faculties*, I shall begin by upsetting certain fanciful notions generally entertained respecting mind or mental faculties in the aggregate.

Modern, and many ancient, metaphysicians, have thought proper to imagine man a two-fold, or rather two-natured, animal. One part of him, that they knew something about, they called BODY—the other, about which they knew nothing, they called MIND, and, singularly enough, the mind has had infinitely more attention paid to it than the body.

Now, I am not aware that our forefathers knew, or that we know anything of mind, as an entity, that is, an individual something. When we speak of body, we speak of that of which we have a clear and definite idea. When we speak of mind, we speak of “a something, which, in reality, amounts to nothing,”† and I do not think it is possible to have a clear and definite idea, or, indeed, any idea whatever, of nothing.

Man thinks, unquestionably, but there can be no more thinking where there is no organ, than there can be an organ without matter. But it may be said, a thought is not matter—to which I reply, evidently not—thought is a well-understood result or effect, produced in ourselves and others, by the action and reaction of matter under certain circumstances. Life is thought and thought is life—for thought, after all that has been imagined about it, is but certain modifications of feeling, or sensibility, in which, by common consent, the essence of life is allowed to consist. A man may feel without thinking, in the proper sense of that term—but it is impossible to think without feeling.

Metaphysicians tell us the *mind* feels and thinks, when, in reality, it is evident the *brain* does both. The brain as surely generates thought, as the liver secretes bile, or the heart propels blood. And what should we judge of a philosopher who asserted that it was not the heart, but an immaterial something in the heart did the blood propelling?—not the liver, but a spiritual substance in the liver that secreted bile?—not the brain, but a little bit of *animus mundi*, or any other intangible, inconceivable essence in the brain that did the business of thinking? Should we not deem such a philosopher little better than a fool? He would be deemed sane enough by a vast number of people, in his speculations about the brain, but his notions about a spirit, soul, or mind in liver and heart would be laughed to scorn. And yet it is certainly no more rational to doubt that the brain thinks, than it would be to doubt that the heart propels the blood, or that the liver secretes bile.

Dr. Lawrence was among the first of our countrymen who ventured publicly to combat old notions about spiritual essences, immaterial beings, &c. In his admirable book on “Comparative Anatomy,” he has dealt with the whole question in an honest and masterly manner. Physico-theologians were never before so grappled with. He lays it down as certain, that

There is no digestion without an alimentary cavity, no biliary secretion without some kind of liver, no thought without brain.

He tells us, that

To talk of life as independent of an animal body, to speak of a function without reference to an appropriate organ, is physiologically absurd. It is in opposition to the evidence of our senses and rational faculties. It is looking for an effect without a cause. We might as reasonably expect daylight while the sun is below the horizon.

With a proposition so clear, so almost self-evident before us, on what ground are metaphysicians justified in halving human nature? leaving body as the grosser and more unimportant part, and reserving almost all their affections, no less than attention, for an imaginary thing, called mind. Knowing nothing of mind, save as an *effect*—one of the numerous

phenomena exhibited by matter—we surely are bound to treat it simply as an effect, of which matter is the cause. If matter cannot think, what can? Matter coheres, attracts, repels, resists, and why not think? Is attraction, or cohesion, or repulsion, less inexplicable than thought? Can we any more readily explain why heavy bodies fall through lighter bodies, or why all bodies on the earth's surface tend to the common centre of that earth, than why men think or act? No *ultimate reason* can be given for the existence of anything or the appearance of any phenomena whatever. Dr. Lawrence, in the book already referred to thus writes:

Shall I be told that thought is inconsistent with matter? that we cannot conceive how medullary substances can perceive, remember, judge, reason? I acknowledge that we are entirely ignorant how the parts of the brain accomplish these purposes—as we are how the muscles contract, or how any other living purpose is effected—as we are how heavy bodies are attracted to the earth—how iron is drawn to the magnet—or how two salts decompose each other. Experience is, in all cases, our sole, if not sufficient, instructor—and the constant conjunction of phenomena, as exhibited in her lessons, is the sole ground for affirming a necessary connection between them. If we go beyond this, and come to inquire the manner how, the mechanism by which these things are effected, we shall find every thing around us equally mysterious, equally incomprehensible—from the sun which falls to the earth, to the comet traversing the heavens—from the thread attracted by amber or sealing wax, to the revolution of planets in their orbits—from the formation of a maggot in putrid flesh, to the production of a Newton or a Franklin.

For openly avowing such common-sense opinions as these, Lawrence suffered, and still suffers, persecution. Like his illustrious precursor, Galileo, his spirit yielded to the stroke levelled at it by a vindictive ecclesiastical authority, and, like him, his self-prostration has failed to pacify his enemies, or much soften their deadly hatred. But the opinions are before the world. They cannot perish. They are fast revolutionising human thought, and will inevitably, sooner or later, destroy every vestige of that blundering system of metaphysics which, for so many centuries, has bewildered mankind. They establish the great truth—that man is a being purely and solely material. Upon that truth I rest my science of metaphysics. It is a truth, fundamental to all correct knowledge of the nature of the mind—which term I use, it should be remembered, as the short and convenient term for the totality of the mental faculties. In this sense, the study of mind becomes the most pleasing and profitable that can be imagined, but without the meaning here affixed to the term mind be invariably attached to it, it is unlikely that the student can obtain clear and just ideas of its nature or workings.

It is incredible that the “immaterial” fallacy should have maintained its ground for so many ages, but for the enormous influence of theologians, who, unfortunately for the cause of human advancement, have always had a direct influence in the perpetuation, as well of metaphysical delusion, as political abuse. Almost all the power of society has hitherto been lodged in their hands, and most shamefully have they wielded it. They have taken the most stringent measures to prevent correct knowledge reaching the bulk of the people. The education that they have tolerated, during the last half century, has been infinitely worse than no education at all—but one good thing they have done, they have taught the people to read, and the time is not far removed, when, discarding the theological trash, with which the country is now inundated, they will read matter-of-fact books, written by matter-of-fact men. Whenever the productions of such philosophers as Priestly, Lawrence, and Engledeue, shall be generally read by the poorer classes of society, we shall hear no more about “immaterial beings,” and “spiritual essences, or agencies.” Those eminent men have shown that we have no knowledge of any existence save matter—and far too little knowledge of that. They have shown that all reasonings, based on the hollow assumption of *mind* being *itself* a nature, incidentally, but not necessarily connected with *body*, are fallacious, and most mischievous. They have shown that with the senses begin, and with the senses end, all our knowledge. They have shown that metaphysicians of the immaterialist school are no more justified by reason, in denying that matter *thinks*, than in denying it attracts, repels, or exhibits any other property whatever. The short is, they have demonstrated the truth of metaphysical propositions, which, when popularised, will demolish every fragment of existing metaphysical systems.

Let the reader reflect for a moment, upon the entire revolution of ideas consequent upon a general understanding of the fundamental truth of *my* metaphysical science, namely, that *man is a being solely and purely material*. When that

\* By the substitution of the word *workings* in lieu of *use*, in Dr. Arnott's definition of metaphysics, it is, I conceive, materially improved—seeing that the use of the mental faculties belongs rather to the philosophy of morals, than the science of metaphysics.

† See Dr. Engledeue's Address on Materialism, delivered before the Phrenological Society. Watson.



truth shall be understood, instead of teachers talking about and hunting after an imaginary something called *mind*, all their energies will be directed to the great work of producing in their pupils such a frame or state of body, as will ensure the best and most energetic mental phenomena—instead of studying spiritual essences, they will labour to improve material forms—instead of treating man's mind as an intangible essence, distinct from matter, they will deal with it as an infallible consequence of matter's action—and instead of, as theological-metaphysicians do, labour to improve the body through the mind, they will create any mind they please, through the body.

It is beyond human power to conceive the non-existence of, or to create matter—but mind may be created at will. It is a material phenomenon, and may be produced under an infinite variety of combinations. The character of each combination being altogether contingent upon the knowledge of human nature possessed by the producing agents. All the world's chemists would be puzzled to produce the millionth part of a grain of anything—but the chemist of the mind, he who can combine, analyse, separate, and recombine the elements of thought, has the marvellous power of multiplying, no less than *improving*, those elements, the extent of such power being only limited by the extent of his knowledge.

When the word *mind* shall be understood to mean neither more nor less than the aggregate or totality of certain properties of matter, the schoolmaster will no more dream of erecting it into a distinct or separate nature, than he now dreams of treating as separate natures the properties called gravity, inertia, combustion, fermentation, repulsion, or attraction. With him everything will be matter, and matter will be everything. Dealing only with the tangible and real, he will no longer bewilder himself, and distract his pupil with random nonsense, about "occult qualities," "plastic forms," "spiritual beings," "immaterial entities," and numberless other fanciful inventions—

Dark lanterns of the spirit,  
Which none sees by, save he who bears it.

By contemplating mind as a mere aggregate of properties, we not only lay down a firm basis on which to raise a consistent, harmonious, and durable science of metaphysics—not only establish fixed principles whereon to reason justly, but open up an entirely new field of human investigation. The questions of death and life which have so agitated men, will no longer be viewed as questions of peculiar difficulty, or as one whit more mysterious than any other of the infinite series of phenomena exhibited by matter. A modern anonymous writer\* truly observes, that

Somnambulism, dream, and sleep, constitute a serious difficulty to immaterialists. The illiterate of this class have been satisfied with the explanation given them by their teachers, that it was a mystery. "A revealed truth which we do not comprehend." To materialists there is no mystery in the matter, save that connected with the existence of all things, for "none hath raised the veil of Isis."

Just so, there is but one difficulty to the materialist—that difficulty is, the existence of all or anything. He pretends not to explain that difficulty—further, he is certified it admits not of explanation, and is quite content, when speaking of the universal mystery, to say, with Socrates: "I only know that I know nothing."

In the figurative language of other climes, nature is all that is, all that was, and all that will be—but no mortal hath raised the veil that covers her. No, "the veil of Isis" hath not been raised, in other words, the ultimate reasons of anything we see, taste, hear, touch, feel, or imagine, mock all human investigation, which, from its very commencement, has not advanced a single step in the knowledge of such reasons. Nor does it appear probable that they ever will be plucked from the thick obscurity where they now lie concealed. But what do I write? Are we justified in writing about ultimate reasons at all—when, in point of fact, we do not even know there are such reasons? Reason is relative to man, and where man has no facts whereon to predicate an assertion, he ought not to assert; when data fails him, his reasoning ought to stop, because to reason without facts or data, is not properly to reason, but to indulge in wild speculations as little coherent or rational as those of the wildest lunatic in our asylums.

The amazement so commonly manifested, even by men of

philosophical reputation, at the discovery of any unusual material phenomena, has its source in false principles of metaphysics. How extraordinary! they exclaim, when they see effects to which they have been unaccustomed. These philosophers, no less than country clowns, have their marvellous, more marvellous, and most marvellous. Now, to the materialist there is but one marvel. There is but one riddle, one wonder, one unfathomable thing—and that one thing is the whole. To him there is a single mystery, enclosing within itself all other mysteries. He sees, for example, no more to make him marvel in the phreno-mesmeric effects which are turning so many wits "the seamy side without," than in any other effects whatever. All effects are equally inexplicable, from the falling rain to the revolutions of a planet. To marvel that matter should exhibit phenomena to which we have hitherto been strangers, is the mistake of ignorance. It is a mistake none would make if all were educated to take enlarged views of natural phenomena. It is a mistake originating in the notion that there is something besides matter to regulate and control matter. Few, indeed, have been prepared to understand that our knowledge of what matter is capable of effecting, is almost literally nothing, but whenever the principle shall be generally acknowledged that matter can think, no less than repel or attract, when man shall know himself to be a creature purely and solely material, he will cease to wonder at any effects whatever. Our poets have very much contributed to keep in full vigour the foolish feeling of wonder. Shelley, the least religious of poets, exclaims, in his "Queen Mab:"

How wonderful is death,  
Death and his brother sleep.  
One, pale as yonder waning moon  
With lips of lurid blue;  
The other rosy as the morn,  
When thronged an ocean's wave  
It blushes o'er the world:  
Yet both so passing wonderful!

Now, to the metaphysician, who follows no guide but nature, and by consequence rejects all unnatural jargon about little spirits in men, and great spirits in the universe, the words "passing wonderful," are destitute of rational meaning. To the student of nature, who conducts his investigations upon right principles, and knows how extremely little he knows of the immense sum of natural phenomena, there is neither thing nor effect "passing wonderful." The phreno-mesmeric experiments which make folly stare, only serve to assure him how narrow, how unpeasably small are human ideas, relatively to the immenseness of nature. To him there is nothing more wonderful in death or sleep, than in any other state of body. His wonder begins and ends with body itself. The manifestations, in other words, the phenomena, that body exhibits, however complicated or unusual, are to him no more extraordinary than the most simple and usual with which we are acquainted. Body exists—we know that if we know anything. That which exists must exist in some state. Death is the name we have agreed to give to one state—life to another—sleep, somnambulism, torpor, to other states. But, I repeat, no one of these states being more explicable can be more marvellous than another. It is impossible that any man, however learned he may be, should give an ultimate reason for any such states of matter, until he can furnish a reason why matter exists at all. It is impossible even to conceive a reason for matter's existence, so that to talk about ultimate reasons is sheer waste of time. All reasons necessarily concern natural objects.

How shall we reason but from what we know?

asks the poet, whose chief poem, nevertheless, and the very poem, too, in which that line occurs, is full of reasonings, from what neither he nor anybody else knew. Such are the reasonings which have covered, as it were with a thick cloud, the mental faculties of man, and hindered many of the most sharp-sighted philosophers from clearly seeing their nature or workings. But every lover of his species has now abundant cause to rejoice in the prospect before him. All things seem tending to produce general enlightenment. The "nine-days wonder" of phreno-mesmerism, will be succeeded by an infinitude of others, startling the ill-informed about as long, until the great truth shall be established, that there are no causes save real—no effects save ideal effects.

\* See preliminary remarks to a little twopenny edition of Dr. Lawrence's "Essay on the Functions of the Brain."

# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

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TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

LETTER III.

PROCEEDING upon the ground of Genesis *literally interpreted*, I beg your grace's attention to an important word contained in the first verse of that famous book—I allude to the word God. In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth. Now the sense of the whole sentence rests upon the sense of this word God, for if God mean nothing, your grace will perceive at once no other words in the same sentence can mean anything. Manifestly, therefore, it is of the first importance that we should search for the sense of the word God—for, failing that, as investigators, we fail in all. No single word, perhaps, is more used than that very word, but, to be plain with your grace, I much doubt that it conveys even to those who use it most freely, a definite or clear idea of any actual existence or existences. It is not impossible, however, that my intellectual eyes are covered with so thick a film that I am unable to see what is palpable to other men's sight. Your grace, for example, may attach to the word God an idea of some sort—and if so, you will greatly serve, no less than oblige me, by explaining yourself upon the point. What men clearly conceive they can generally as clearly explain—and if your grace clearly conceives God, there can be small doubt as to your ability to clothe the conception in intelligible words. I gather from learned sources that the word Jupiter is, in another language, God the Father—his other name, Jove, being but another variation of Jehovah, and that the Hebrew pronunciation of Jehovah would be Yahouh, itself but a varied pronunciation of Jo, Yao, or Iu, which, placed before the Greek or Latin word, Pater, the English J being unknown to the Asiatic ancients, makes up the Jupiter, or God the Father.

But all this, as your grace must know, does not enlighten us as to the *nature* or *unnature* of the *Being* called by such a variety of names—and it is a want of enlightenment upon these points constitutes a prime difficulty in the way of my embracing christianity. If the nature or no nature of God could be so far explained as to be conceivable by me, then I might understand how "*he*" could have "created the heavens and the earth;" but I must be helped to an understanding of a Creator of all things before I can allow, or even conceive that all was created.

Though having great confidence in your grace's talent for teaching, and disposition to teach, I am almost convinced you will fail to teach me what the word God means, for the sufficient reason that you do not thoroughly know yourself. If your grace does know what in nature, or out of nature, supposing nature to have an outside, the word is intended to convey an idea of, why it is plain that you are wiser than the wisest of ancient or modern saints and sages. Surely even your grace will allow, that whether we call the unnatural Being presumed by theologians to exist, Jupiter, Jove, Jo, Yao, Yahouh, Iu, Jehovah, Lord, or, as more commonly,

God, is of little consequence as respects our knowledge of such unnatural Being's nature—names or phrases are of course only useful when they assist us to a true conception of persons, things, and the multitudinous phenomena exhibited by persons and things.

Now, your grace is aware that thinkers, who follow reason as the least fallible of guides, generally admit that the idea of a living, and of course sentient, *Being*—no matter what called—no matter whether conceived of as natural or unnatural—is always associated with the idea of bodily structure, if not with what is usually understood by personality. I am aware that almost all theists steadfastly deny the personality of their Deity. Our God, say they, *is not a person, he is a spirit*—not a material, but an immaterial, Being—not matter, but an inconceivable essence pervading and regulating all matter! How a non-entity can act upon and regulate all entities—how there can be an unnatural Being who feels and thinks, without parts or organs—who exists, yet is formless—acts constantly upon substance without being himself substantial—I should like your grace to explain, for I confess myself, at present, totally unable, though far from unwilling, to comprehend it. Locke seems to have felt how difficult it is to separate from the words, intelligent Deity, the idea of personality, and of consequence, materiality. His words are:

How many amongst us will be found, upon inquiry, to fancy God in the shape of a man sitting in heaven, and to have other absurd and unfit conceptions of him. Christians as well as Turks have had whole sects owning or contending earnestly for it—that the Deity was corporeal, and of human shape; and although we find few amongst us who profess themselves anthropomorphites (though some I have met with own it), yet I believe he that will make it his business may find amongst the ignorant and uninstructed christians many of that opinion.

So far Locke, whose opinion I doubt not your grace will highly esteem; but I by no means think, as we may infer from the foregoing, Locke thought, namely, that anthropomorphism is confined "to ignorant and uninstructed christians"—for even the best informed christians, though they may refuse to confess so much, really have no idea of the God they worship distinct from *personal* agency. Nature is the acknowledged source of all ideas properly so called—and even your grace will admit, that where there are no organs there cannot possibly be senses, and that where there are no senses there cannot possibly be knowledge. It follows from this reasoning, that either we have no idea of which the term God is the sign, or that it is the sign of something, part and parcel of nature; but, as before candidly avowed, I have failed to discover its original—nay, more, my researches have ended in a conviction, that if those who use and pretend to understand the word God were called upon to explain the idea it conveys, or point out the original from whence such idea is derived, they would be unable to do either.

I presume that all those who are ranked by your grace among sound christians, deny the materiality of their God—they insist that God is spirit, *NOR* matter. Now, if there be one proposition more clearly true than another, it is the proposition that nothing can be thought of as distinct from matter. Nevertheless, the God theists adore is necessarily con-



ceived by them, if conceived at all, of some figure—and to this fact Xenophanes pointed when he said :

If the ox or the elephant understood either sculpture or painting, they would not fail to represent the Deity under their own peculiar figure, and in so doing, they would have as much reason as Polyctus or Phidias, who gave him the human form.

Here, then, is a tremendous difficulty for your grace to solve, if you can—for I cannot but think that nature is the grand and only source of ideas; nor is it likely that your grace will stake your reputation for nature and learning by questioning so palpable a truth. But if nature, which is another term for universe, be the only source of ideas, whence can come an idea of a Being confessedly unnatural? An idea of the universe must, it seems to me, shut out all ideas of anything beyond or external thereto. All includes all, of course—for from all nothing can be subtracted, as to all nothing can be added; and it is surely incumbent upon those who say there is a God to take up and defend the notion of *limited* matter; they are, in point of fact, bound logically to prove that matter has its limits, or at least establish the *probability* of such limitation by an appeal to clear analogies. If, however, as is generally conceded by theists themselves, naught but material existences can act upon or in any wise influence material organs, *a fortiori*, we cannot know, or reasonably reason upon, any other kind of existence. Your grace, as a christian theist, is called upon to admit the God you adore is material, or to admit that, in reality, there is no such Being. Now, I doubt very much that your grace is prepared to suffer martyrdom upon either horn of this dilemma, and yet how you can escape with consistency I am quite at a loss to conceive. For you to allow that the word God is one of the very many meaningless terms which are only used by, and useful to, those who labour to cajole, bewilder, and enslave the human race, would, I know, be conduct quite unbecoming in your grace, who, as head of a christian church, should allow everything likely to preserve, and nothing likely to destroy that church. But if you do not allow such to be the fact, there seems to be no consistent alternative than at once frankly to admit that the word God is the sign of a material Being. Such, your grace, is a candid statement of what I conceive to be the alarming position in which you as a christian are placed—for all christians are theists, though all theists are not christians.

That your grace may be convinced this word God means neither more nor less than each individual chooses to think it does, I will now lay before you some choice definitions of that word, that I have drawn from the writings of Europe's chief theosophers. I shall set them down as they occur to me, without regard to country or chronology.

According to Brucker, Socrates defined God, as THE CAUSE OF THE UNIVERSE—a most unsatisfactory definition, by the way, as the word *cause*, when used in relation to the *universe*, is no more intelligible than the word God. Definitions, as your grace well knows, should be clearer than the word or words defined. Theologians, it is true, laugh most scornfully at what they call the atheistical idea of a self-making universe. The universe, say these laughers, must have had a cause. Having arrived at that conclusion, and called the presumed cause God, they sit down with much self-complacency and satisfaction. They pass over what ought not to be passed over, namely, the fact that this very idea of a self-making universe is not an atheistical but a theistical idea. Theologians invented, and doubtless with the holiest intentions, have taken much pains to give atheists the entire credit of it. Any one with half an eye must see that the theological idea of a self-making universe is totally incompatible with the atheistical idea of a self-existent universe. A self-existent universe never could have been made, in the theological sense, and it is evident that what never was made could not have made itself.

Such, your grace, is a sample of the tricks too frequently played off, even by theologians of that orthodox church of which you are the head, at their opponents' expense. They ingeniously concoct all sorts of fanciful reasonings, call them the reasonings of their opponents, and then most ingeniously refute them. It is no fault of your grace that orthodox christians thus act, but that they do thus act is a truth abundantly testified by their productions. But with respect to the Socratical definition of God, I have somewhat digressed from the consideration of—it has at least the merit of reminding one that its author would have done well, had he

acted upon his own maxim—that what is above us does not concern us—rather than concoct strange gibberish about causes of universes. But Socrates was far from being alone in this kind of glory.

Aristotle considered God to be "A mind, immutable and impassable, an eternal, and most perfect animal, perpetually employed in imparting motion to the universe." Of which curious account of Deity the late Julian Hibbert remarked, "It must be dull work to be eternally trundling a wheel-barrow, and perhaps hard work too for an incorporeal being." But Mr. Hibbert was a thorough-going waggish kind of atheist, therefore it is not probable your grace will esteem him a qualified judge of Aristotle's, or any other theosopher's, sublime speculations.

Anaxagoras defined God as "An infinite, incorporeal mind, that gave motion to the previously quiescent matter, which then of itself, by the consequence of the ΟΜΟΙΟΜΕΛΙΑΙ, or homogeneous particles, assumed the forms which now exist."

According to old Pythagoric writers, God is unique—[he] is not, as some suppose, beyond the universal frame, but he is wholly in himself, in the whole circle—[he] watcheth over all acts of production, being a mixture of the universe, eternally, and a worker of his [own] powers and works—[he is the] beginning of all [things]—[he is] one—[he is] a luminary in heaven—and of all [things] father, mind, and spirituality of [the] universe.

Plato conceived God to be the Father of the World; but your grace will probably agree with me in thinking the conceit was bad, seeing that a father, in the only sense that we can gather from that word, does not *create*, but only *begets*, children, whereas christian theologians maintain that their God did create the world, by a simple act of volition calling all that is out of nonentity. That Plato attached our sense to the word father is clear, from the fact of his having maintained the *ex nihilo nihil fit* doctrine, from nothing nothing can come.

Apollonius Tyaneus, who flourished about the time Jesus Christ was born, as theosophers tell us, imagined that "God is all things, or the unique, but variously modified substances of all things."

Themistius gave no regular definition of Deity, but held the opinion that he wishes to hide himself. That theosopher considered God as a Being who does not wish all men to be of the same religion, but purposely leaves them to think about him as they choose. How Themistius got at a knowledge of his God's wishes and purposes does not appear, and I cannot even imagine; but it is perhaps warrantable to suppose, that if there is an author of nature, he could not have intended we should understand what philosophers call its ultimate reasons; unless, indeed, we suppose what is scarce supposable of such an author, namely, that he intended us to know so much, but as is commonly the case with unskilful human authors, failed to execute what he had conceived. Such a supposition, striking at the omnipotence of God, I do not expect your grace will give countenance to.

Seneca's definition of God, if definition it may be called, seems to me purely atheistical. Nature, said he, is God, and God is nature. The atheist is content with one word for one idea, Seneca liked two better, and herein lies the difference between them. This wordy atheism of Seneca's, reminds me of the ancient Persians, who, according to Herodotus, considered that the Supreme God was the entire circle of the heavens. About the substantiality of *their* God, there can, I presume, be no mistake.

It was affirmed by Arnobius, and many other ancient sages, that the Jewish sect of Sadducees attributed forms of corporeality to God, but had they said the Sadducees did not believe in anything save nature, in other words, that they were atheists, they would have said the whole truth.

Brucker tells us that the Cabballists, called the Deity a fountain of infinite light, and a hidden and inexhaustible sea. They denied the existence of matter, yet, nevertheless, conceived the divine essence could be divided.

In the history of the Turk's religion, by Michael Baudier, your grace may find an assurance that Mohammed thought, or at least called God "A round and extremely cold body." Now, I cannot but conclude that a spherical-shaped Deity, cold or hot, must be material. Okail, sometimes called Lebidi, the poet of Mohammed, said, "All that is not God is nothing, for God is all things;" and I am told that God, according to orthodox mohammedans, is the necessarily existing essence. He is uniform, eternal, the first and last, the interior and exterior. He is not a corporeal form, nor a circumscribed substance, nor a defined measure.

The Soofis of Persia, I learn from Brucker, believe that God, or the eternal, immutable Being, draws out from his own substance, not only (human) souls, but whatever is corporeal and material in the universe. Creation, therefore, if we may believe these Soofis, is only an extraction, production, or extension of the divine substance, drawn like a spider's web out of the Deity's entrails. One idea of these theologians is so curious, as to warrant a passing notice. They compare their Deity to a vast ocean, in which swim innumerable phials full of water, so that the water, if the bottles are broken, returns again to the ocean from whence it was derived.

The Chinese say, God is the soul inhabiting the whole world, but more especially the heavens. The soul of man, Chinese theologians positively assure us, emanates from the universal soul and reverts to it.

The Brahmins, when asked to define God, trace a circle, as if they said, God is the great circle of nature. In a Brahminical book, called the Veds, the Supreme Being is declared not comprehensible by vision, or by any other of the organs of sense, nor can he be conceived by means of devotion, or virtuous practices. He sees everything, though never seen—hears everything, though never heard. He is neither short, nor is he long—inaccessible to the reasoning faculty—nor to be compassed by description, beyond the limits of the Ved, or of human conception.

Saint Clemens Alexandrinus informs us, the true Deity has neither dimension, nor end, nor figure, and he cannot be named—if we call him the one, or the good, or the mind, or Demiurgus, or Lord, we only use these fine terms from want of a better, that the mind may rest on them.

Lactantius, who your grace is doubtless aware wrote a book to prove God's *anger*, was of opinion that his angry God has figure and form—and furthermore, that he is the force, or rather, the wisdom of nature.

Synesius wrote most rhapsodically and sublimely of his Deity, more so, if that be possible, than any other god-definer I have yet quoted. His words are, "Thou (God) art a father and a mother, a male and a female—thou art voice and silence—thou art the fruitful nature of natures—thou art the father of all the fathers—and being without a father, thou art thine own father and son. O source of sources, principle of principles, root of roots, thou art the unity of unities, the number of numbers, being both unity and number. Thou art one and all things, one of all things, and one before all things." Whether these wild phrases mean anything or nothing, whether they are of the slightest conceivable utility, considered as explanatives of God's nature, or no nature, your grace perhaps will tell me at your earliest convenience.

The famous Saint Cyrillus of Jerusalem, sagely declared, "It is enough for our piety to know we have a God, an unique Deity, who is all eye, all ear, and all mind." I repeat it, sagely declared—for it would most unquestionably be enough for sense, no less than piety, if we really knew of such a God—but, unluckily, "each individual is so organised," as Robert Owen would say, that he cannot understand or know a God, *all eye, all ear, and all mind*. Strangely enough, this very distinguished saint himself *seemed* sometimes to hold a like opinion, for he explicitly stated that "many have attempted to give a description of Deity, but all have failed."

Saint Augustinus, also, had the candour to say, "God is a being whom we speak of, but whom we cannot describe—and who is superior to all definitions."

Here I break off, having, I trust, proved to your grace's satisfaction that God is a word which admits not of a reasonable or satisfactory definition, or, at least, has not been reasonably or satisfactorily defined. If any human beings could have rendered it intelligible, surely those distinguished saints and philosophers, whose words I have quoted, would not have failed to do so. That they have most miserably failed in this particular, is, as we have seen, allowed by Saint Cyrillus himself, and surely your grace will allow no less. Not one of the so called definitions in the long list here offered to your grace's notice, can possibly help us in the slightest degree to a knowledge or an idea of that unnatural Being, christian and other theists tell us created the universe.

Dionysius, the Areopagite, said, "We then best know God, when we know that we do not know him"—and unless your grace is prepared to see wisdom in that most silly paradox, I hope you will denounce such definitional trash, and furnish something better. The learned Erasmus, when alluding upon a certain occasion to men of the same stamp as these

god-definers, said, they would be no less profitably employed in teaching hens to chuck—writing upon the surface of the water—boiling a stone—shaving an ass—or setting an ox to catch hares—and, to be candid with your grace, my opinion of such men is no whit more favourable than this of Erasmus. But though your grace may clearly see how absurd it is for theosophers to attempt the definition of a Being confessedly unnatural and incomprehensible, yet it is abundantly evident that unless you can give some rational account of the God who "created the heavens and the earth," there is an end to all hope that reasonable sceptics will turn christians. I do, therefore, entreat your grace to at once set about proving there is a Being not natural, as unless that be proved by solid reasonings, based on known facts, it does not appear possible your church can long resist the many fierce attacks made upon it. I know your grace will find the task of explaining and proving a God no easy one, but the labour we delight in "physics pain," and surely there is no kind of labour so truly delightful to your grace, as removing those obstructions, and solving those difficulties which hinder me, and thousands such as me, from embracing christianity.

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

## SPECULATIONS ON MAN.

The proper study of mankind is man.—POPE.

### II.

THERE has been a great deal of ingenious, if not very profound or useful speculation, as to the *manner* in which man originated. Epicurus\* believed that man and all other animals originally came out of the earth, in the same manner as we see it teeming with rats, moles, and insects of every species. He supposed the earth in its primitive state to have been fat and nitrous—that being gradually heated by the sun, it put forth herbage and shrubs, and began to throw up on its surface a great number of small tumours, in the same way that mushrooms spring up—that these tumours, coming to maturity, the skin swelled and broke, and gave liberty to a little animal, which creeping out from the moisture that had generated it, began to respire—and that as soon as these animals were thus born, there issued from the same humours that had served them as their wombs streams of milk wherewith to nourish them. Among the vast number of animals thus brought forth, many monsters were to be found, some without heads, others without feet, some without mouths, others mere trunks—so that some were unable to take nourishment, and others to propagate their species, hence there only remained such as were perfectly organised, and from them we derived all the different species of animal life which we find now existing.

According to Epicurus, the earth in its primitive state was not subjected to such extremes of heat and cold, and vicissitudes of the seasons, as at present. All things were then in their infancy; the race of men newly sprung from the earth were much more robust than we; their bodies were covered with shaggy hair, like the bears; they neither required nor knew the use of garments; and the coarsest food sufficed to nourish them. Wherever night came upon them, there they threw themselves naked on the earth to sleep, and if it chanced to rain, they crept beneath the bushes for shelter. They had not yet begun to congregate together. Every one thought only of himself, and labored only for his individual wants.

Among other productions of the earth, were trees, which increasing every day, had formed vast forests. Men, therefore, began to live upon acorns, wild apples, and the fruits of the arbutus. In procuring these, they were often exposed to rencontres with bears and lions, and they began to go in parties, in order that they might be better enabled to defend themselves from the ferocious animals. They next raised small huts, occupied themselves in the chase, and contrived to make themselves garments from skins of the animals they killed. They chose wives for themselves, and each lived in his own hut, with the woman that he selected. From the intercourse between these pairs arose children, who softened

\* Fenelon's Lives of the Ancients.



by their infantine endearments the ferocious humour of their father.

Such was Epicurus's conception of human and brute origin, and the first steps taken by our earliest progenitors in the paths of civilisation. The same, or nearly the same, doctrine has been recently taught in Germany by Dr. Strauss, whose *Leben Jesu* (Life of Jesus) has created so extraordinary a sensation in this country. Doctrines very like these of Epicurus may be found in his latest work, "The historical development of Christianity, in opposition with Modern Science," a work which has been stigmatised, by a writer in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, as an atheistical production. The fierce wrath of this reviewer, notwithstanding, one cannot help wishing that the world was benefited by the researches and speculations of a score or two of such writers as Dr. Strauss. But with respect to the soundness of Epicurean doctrine in relation to the beginning of the human species, I think it may be pronounced no less feasible, if no more feasible than any other. It must be confessed, the objections commonly urged against it, are altogether futile. The chief objection to this theory of Epicurus was, that the earth no longer brought forth dogs, bears, lions, or other animals—to which he replied, that the fecundity of the earth was exhausted by age—as a woman advanced in years no longer bears children—that lands newly cultivated produce much greater crops the first year than in succeeding ones—that when a forest is cut down, the same ground no longer furnishes such trees as have been rooted up, but only a degenerate and dwarfish race, such as thorns, briars, and other under-wood. He argues, moreover, that there may be, even at the present time, rabbits, hares, foxes, bears, and other animals, brought forth in a perfect state by the earth alone—but that such events occurring only in solitary places, where we cannot have evidence of the fact, we are unwilling to admit it—any more than that of rats being produced out of the earth, because we ourselves have never seen any other than what were produced by other rats.\*

It is evident, that unless we are revelationists, to one of two opinions of human and brute origin we must hold, either denying as Aristotle did, that any species of animals had a beginning, or asserting that there have been, and, perhaps are, conditions of the soil on which we tread, equal to the production of animal no less than other kinds of life. Thoroughly convinced myself that the Aristotelian hypothesis of man's eternal existence as man is insupportable, and knowing nothing of a theist's one God, or a polytheist's many Gods, consequently knowing nothing of revelations made to man by such Being or Beings, I cannot but conclude that our earth, under certain circumstances, has produced perfect animals, nor am I any nearer certainty than was Epicurus as to production *now* of certain creatures, seeing that "such events may occur in solitary places, where we cannot have evidence of the fact."

The famous Paracelsus undertook to prescribe a way to make children without going through the usual troublesome process. I will undertake nothing of the sort—first, because I am unacquainted with any prescription adequate to the production of such effects—second, because if I could adequately prescribe, I should be loath to do so. Sir Thomas Brown says, in his "Religio Medici," "I could be content that we might procreate like trees, without conjunction, or that there were any way to perpetuate the world without the trivial and vulgar mode." But there are, perhaps, few who will agree with Sir Thomas Brown in this particular, and certainly I am not one of the number—though I should be well pleased, if matter in certain conditions can produce men, to see a score or two produced. But if, as Epicurus thought, our earth's fecundity is exhausted by age, as is that of a woman advanced in years, why it is not at all likely my wishes will be gratified.

However absurd these speculations of Epicurus may appear to the more orthodox and matter of fact of my readers, I can assure them that philosophers and divines, who have received with implicit faith the Genesis account of man's origin, put forth doctrines quite as absurd, and far less likely to be true. Mr. King, in his "Morsels of Criticism," assures us that "the writers of the Septuagint, do not express themselves as if they conceived only Adam and Eve were created, but as if they understood that many more men and women were created." Surely, *a priori*, one might have expected that what a God revealed for the instruction of mankind, would have

been less misunderstandable than the bible is found to be. The same christian author asserts:

That as in the whole wondrous chain of creation, every particular kind or sort of animal, as well as whales, exist in a distinct *genus*, consisting of many subdivisions of different *species*, all of whom are, nevertheless, of the same blood, and can produce and procreate the intermediate *species*—whereas, animals of different *genera* cannot produce any continuing offspring—so man, also, the head of the visible creation on earth, was at first created of one *genus*, indeed, and of one blood, and in the image of God, but of different *species*. . . . . It is almost impossible to rest satisfied with believing, contrary to the whole analogy of the works of creation, that the white European, or Asiatic, and the black long-haired South American, the black curled hair African Negro, the Cossack Tartar, the Esquimaux, and the Malayan, were all descended from one common ancestor and mother. And especially, as to this hour the very gradation by which a white family may, by various tinting descents, become a black one, and by which a black family may become a white one, are well known.

Here the reader will perceive the authority of Genesis is set aside as of no validity—for in that book we are told God created man in his own image, in the image of himself; we are told, moreover, that male and female created he them—whereas, Mr. King affirms it is impossible to rest satisfied with believing the white European, the Asiatic black, the long haired South American, the black curly-haired African negro, the Cossack Tartar, the Esquimaux, and the Malayan, were all descended from one common ancestor and mother.

But though this morsel of Mr. King's criticism runs full tilt against the authority of Genesis, he asserts, as we have seen, that men were all created of one *genus* and one blood, and in the image of God too—which facts he could have gathered from no other than a divine collection, seeing it is only in such a collection facts can be found establishing the oneness of human *genus* or blood, and the truth so flattering to the vanity of idolaters, namely, that they were made in the image of the God they idolise. Bacon, centuries ago, declared nothing could be worse than deified error; and the older I grow, the more firm is my conviction that he declared rightly. It is deified error which, more than error of any other conceivable kind, obstructs while it pollutes the pure and fertilising stream of truth.

Many learned rabbins taught that Adam was created double, that is, with both sexes, male on one side, and female on the other—and that both these bodies were joined together by the shoulders, the heads looking on places directly opposite, like the heads of Janus. They taught—but no, I won't set down any more of their teaching, lest the saints accuse me of indecency. Engubinus only differed with these learned rabbins as to the position of our two-fold parents' body. He pretends that they stuck together by the sides, and resembled each other in all things except the sex. The male body, he was quite sure, was on the right, and embraced the other by the neck with his left hand, while the other did the like to him with the right hand.

We are told by pious people that we only need search the Scriptures to find a confutation of all such chimeras; but it is odd that some of the ablest and most learned of scripture searchers have given currency to chimeras quite as chimerical. The renowned William Law, for example, author of the "Call to Holy Life," was of opinion that the first human being was a creature combining both sexes in its own perfect nature. Will any one say that the Epicurean hypothesis is less respectable or creditable than this?

More than a century since, a French lady, by name Antoinette Bourignon, wrote a book with the imposing title of "The New Heaven and the New Earth," in which she settled to her own, and some half-dozen persons' satisfaction, the long disputed sexual question. "Men (said she) think to have been created by God as they are at present, although it is not true, seeing sin has disfigured the work of God in them, and instead of men, as they ought to be, they are become monsters in nature, divided into two imperfect sexes, unable to produce their like alone, as trees and plants do, which, in that point, have more perfection than men or women, incapable to produce by themselves but in conjunction with each other, and with pain and misery."

Gratian du Pont, in his book, "Les Controverses des Sexes," says, that as a man is to rise at the resurrection with the same body, though the limbs be ever so far assunder, consequently Adam retakes the rib which formed Eve—then, of necessity, Eve becomes a rib, and ceases to be a woman; and so, that learned author assures us, it will happen to the sex in general, as every woman represents Eve, and every man, Adam. Hence he concludes the female nonentity; as does the reasoning of Antoinette Bourignon—reasoning, methinks, little complimentary to the fair sex.

\* Fenelon's Lives of the Ancients.

† Campanel de Sensu Rerum, in appendix, ad. cap. 19, 1.4.

Those of my readers who are amused at the hypothesis of Epicurus, as to our hot and nitrous primitive earth bringing forth monsters — some without heads, others without feet, some without mouths, others mere trunks, &c., will most likely be shocked to find that very many christian philosophers, men "learned in the scripture," did imagine the most extraordinary things with respect to the state and shape of our "first parents." One of these learned christians, De Maillet, *proved*, or at least he thought he proved, Adam, our great progenitor, to have been a fish, and that our marine parents had their tails forked ere they became amphibious. Some Jews, who ought to be acquainted with the text of Moses, assert most confidently that Adam was born with the circumcision—which assertion is strange enough, if not quite so strange as that of De Maillet. Coming circumcised into the world seems more reconcileable with the dignity of our first parents than floundering into it in a fish-like shape, with forked tails. If De Maillet's speculations be worth anything, what very droll looking fish Adam and Eve must have been. Porson, in his "Devil's Walk,"\* thus describes the *Most Low*:

Pray how was the devil dressed?  
Oh he was in his Sunday's best;  
His coat was red, and his breeches blue,  
With a hole behind, where his tail popped through.

Surely the first man of M. de Maillet must have been a far less respectable looking sort of gentleman than this "exquisite" devil. Epicurus, as we have seen, thought that the first race of men were much more robust and hardy than the present race, that their bodies were covered with shaggy hair like the bears, that they neither required nor knew the use of garments, and were well nourished as well as satisfied by the coarsest food—all of which is, I think, rather more credible than the wild tale told by De Maillet about men and their wives with fish-like shapes and forked tails. The truth is, Epicurus seems to have hit upon a less ludicrous and far more probable theory without a revelation, than these Jews and christians have with it. But I have not yet quite done with these latter.

In a book written by one Isaac la Peyrere, of Bourdeaux, printed about 1653, entitled "Pre-Adamites," it is ingeniously stated that Adam was *not* the first man. The learned author piled proof upon proof of that important fact, but he failed to convince all the world, though he raised a considerable dust in it; his book being burnt by the common hangman, as per authority, and written against by at least a score of authors who had a mortal aversion to the pre-Adamite doctrine.

The colour and size of "our first parents" has long been subject for fierce debate. Whether they were white, blue, green, olive, or black, revelation does not, and theologians cannot, settle. Mr. R. Payne Knight, in his work on "Taste," insists upon it, that Adam, in Paradise, was an African black; and the, perhaps, most able of practical surgeons, John Hunter, thought the human species was originally black. His reason has been declared pregnant with some colour, because black animals will breed white ones, but no white ones will breed black ones. I, the reader must please to understand, won't answer either for the fact, or the inference from the fact, all I answer for, if required, is, that John Hunter, as well as Mr. R. Payne Knight, and other eminent men, did think the human species was originally black. The question has been asked—how, if man was not originally black, can there be any human beings of that colour? Dr. Camper was sure the race of blacks originated from the commerce of the whites with orangs and pongoes, or that these creatures, by gradual improvement, finally became in the very image of God, as we now find them. Those who don't fall in with this black theory of Dr. Camper's, may consult Lord Kames, who assures us in his "Sketches," that the negro colour is owing to an ancient custom in Africa, of dyeing the skin black—and then choose between his lordship and the doctor.

Of Adam's size, we have many, and it is likely all equally true accounts; but that he was astonishingly big, was in former ages received as certain fact. In the "Rabbinical Bibliothéque" of Father Bartoloci, we are informed that before the fall, Adam's stature extended from one end of the world to the other; but that after the fall he only measured one hundred ells. And Barcepha, in his book "De Paradiso," makes mention of authors, who knew that Adam, when driven out of paradise, crossed the sea on foot to come into our world, and that he found it everywhere fordable, his stature was

so enormous. The Polyphemus of poetry, if introduced to such an Adam, would scarce be able to reach his knee-pan. Of course so large an Adam required a tolerable sized Eve for a companion. Monceus in his Travels, favours us with the Arabian Creed, as to the gigantic size of "our first parents," in a story the most marvellous imaginable. The said story relates, as unquestionable fact, that the two knees of Eve were as many musket shots from each other. In Ceylon, travellers inform us, the pious pretend that the prints of Adam's feet are yet to be found there, more than two palms in length.

Having supposed the body of Adam of size so enormous, it cannot surprise one that the same wise Jews and christians should suppose a mind in every way fitted to inhabit so huge a tenement. Charles Blount, in his "Animi Mundi," truly tells us, that

In times past men have looked upon the soul to be to the body, as we see gunpowder is to the gun, and that a body without a soul, is but a piece of ordnance uncharged, useless to the operation nature assigned to it. Therefore, when men run mad through overmuch wit, knowledge, or learning, they may not improperly be said to be overcharged; as, on the contrary, the reason why men *visto corpore* are generally more heavy, dull, and half-witted, may proceed from their being undercharged. As we see the same quantity of powder which gives a report in a pistol gives little or none in a cannon, the disproportion of the cause diversifying the effects.

If, then, we conclude, as many Jews and christian authors did, that Adam and his spouse bore about the same relation to the men and women of our day, as does a twenty-four pounder to a pocket-pistol, and if we conclude, as I shall presently show we are warranted in doing, namely, that Adam was no less wise than big, whose body, like a well dealt with piece of ordnance, was neither undercharged nor overcharged, but just charged enough, why I think we shall get at a most magnificent idea of the intellectuality of "our first parent." Now, that he was a great philosopher we are positively assured by Moreri, in his "Dictionaire Historique," where I read that he (Adam) had a perfect knowledge of sciences and chiefly of astrology, divers fine secrets relating to which he taught his children. I also read in that curious volume how the learned Adam engraved some observations that he had made as to the course of the stars, on two several tables. Indeed, if we may credit Moreri, Adam was the first and last of sublimely perfect and perfectly sublime philosophers—a philosopher in all respects so admirable, that Faber Stapulensis was convinced, if he had but remained innocent the world would have been well peopled without Eve, who has been thought by him and other sages, at best but a necessary evil.

Here I stop, not because I have exhausted my subject, for that is inexhaustible, but because I wish to furnish only so many of these preposterous speculations at once, with respect to the origin and character of a presumed first man and woman, as may amuse and instruct, without surfeiting, the reader.

#### STATE *versus* REAL CHRISTIANITY.

It is a common objection urged against christianity, that it has proved a more fertile source of war and bloodshed since its introduction to the world than all other causes put together. Indeed, it constitutes the whole stock-in-trade of many of the small hucksters of "rational opinions." Men who have just begun to think—apprentices and shopmen, who chafe their minds into the first consciousness of life at debating societies—mechanics, who satisfy the longings of newly created intellectual appetite with stuff which fills them with nothing but the wind of conceit—worn out debauchees, anxious, as the storm of passion subsides, to prevent the storm of conscience from getting up—all betake themselves to this grand position of assailing the truth. The rant and ritaldery which have been expended upon this topic are altogether beyond calculation. It will serve your open-mouthed declaimers when all others fail. It may be beaten out to cover any conceivable extent of surface. It opens the garden gate to eighteen centuries of rank and poisonous ecclesiastical history, and it will be odds if your ingenious sceptic cannot find in all that space illustrations bitter enough with which to make argument sicken, turn pale, and swoon away, if not expire. And making due deductions for possible exaggeration, the objection is not destitute of force, if state christianity is to be taken as *real* christianity.

The powers that have made but a sorry thing of the gospel of peace. When, upon the introduction of tea into this country, the old wives of the day served up the boiled leaves as vegetable diet, and threw away the decoction, in consequence of which it was pronounced to be an article unfit for human food, they made no greater blunder in their way than civil rulers in their modes of exhibiting truth have done in theirs. They poisoned society with what, properly administered, was a blessing. "Who says that tea is fit to eat?" said the dogmatists in dietetics of a former age. "Who can outeat that christianity has blessed mankind?" ask the confident impugners of religion in our own times. Now it may suffice to say to the first, that tea was not made to be eaten, and to the last, that christianity was not revealed to be established by the civil authorities. The evil in both cases lies not in the thing itself, but in the utter mis-

\* Coleridge, not Porson, is said by many, was the imaginer of that most amusing of promenades.



take made as to the proper manner of serving it up. Hence in the one instance we had *nausea*—in the other, strife, bloodshed, and misery.—“Nonconformist,” of March 29, 1843.

Here we have, in a small compass, one of the most specious and well put apologies for christianity I ever remember to have met with. But is it as sound as specious? Is it an apology that any reasonable man ought to be satisfied with? Let us see. The writer is, I presume, a sincere nonconformist—one who hates *state*, but most ardently loves *real*, christianity. He admits the full force of an objection, so commonly raised against christianity, that “it has proved a more fertile source of war and bloodshed since its introduction to the world than all other causes put together.” But he warily leads us to infer that the objection has no force, except *state* christianity be taken as *real* christianity.

This is the way we are continually met by priests and their abettors. The mischiefs their religion has produced stare them in the face. Iron-visaged and conscience-seared though they be, they cannot deny that christianity was the source of those mischiefs, so most liberally admit the fact; but then, say they, it was not *pure*, but *corrupt*, religion—not *real*, but *state*, christianity was their “fertile source.” Oh, miserable sophistry! Is it not known to every schoolboy who has opened “the garden-gate to eighteen centuries of rank and poisonous ecclesiastical history,” that during nearly the whole of that period christians have been endeavouring to separate *spurious* from *real* christianity? and can any schoolboy be ignorant, that notwithstanding all their fierce debates, and fiercer butcheries and burnings, the *true* or *real* christianity is just as little understood now as at the very moment of its birth? What constitutes *real* christianity is altogether matter of individual opinion. This “Nonconformist” writer, no doubt, is quite satisfied that if *his* religion had full swing, results marvellously beneficial would inevitably follow—but his next-door neighbour, who is probably a conformist, is no less satisfied that religion, or christianity, as by law established, if undisturbed and unpolluted by the “dissenting crew,” would produce the largest possible amount of human benefit. Who, I pray, is this nonconformist, that he should thrust himself forward as infallible judge of what constitutes *real* christianity? If religion, like the sciences, rested on self-evident principles, or principles susceptible of proof, and could appeal to acknowledged facts in justification of its Babylonish superstructure of argument, we could understand why its advocates might stand forward and talk by the hour about their *true* religion or their *real* christianity.

This flashy nonconformist, who is evidently “every inch” a gentleman, sneers at “men who have just begun to think—apprentices and shopmen who chafe their minds into the first consciousness of life at debating societies,” attacking christianity through the side of its own history, or, as he phrases it, “betaking themselves to this grand position of attacking the truth.” Now it does not appear to have occurred to this genteel unmechanical reasoner, that if there be truth in the christian, or any other religion, it is truth having nothing in common with any other sort of truth. There is no fixity in religious truth. It is one thing to day, another tomorrow, and a third the next day. Proteus of fable never assumed a greater variety of sometimes frightful, and sometimes comical shapes, than christianity of fact. “If (to borrow from Milton) shapes they may be called, which shapes have none.” The acerbity of our nonconformist towards shopmen, mechanics, and other ignoramuses, “filled with the wind of conceit,” whom he classes by the way, with “worn out debauchees,” I willingly pass over with the simple recommendation that he should remember, the principle of nonconformity, as most every other beneficial principle, originated with “the dregs of the people”—mechanics, shopmen, and so forth. The educated classes have never been known, in any age, to stand forward as the champions of beneficial principles, or to take the lead in beneficial practices. I advise, therefore, the “Nonconformist” to be less aristocratic in his notions, and seriously consider whether it is only the despised shopman and mechanic, whose heads are filled with “nothing but the wind of conceit”—let him reflect upon the truth, so well expressed by the “wretched staymaker” and “miserable exciseman,” Thomas Paine, that “the greatest characters the world ever beheld, have risen upon the democratical floor.”

Having thus gently rebuked the pride of our nonconformist, I will now pay my respects to his “tea” interpretation, which no doubt will convince very many “old wives” who deal largely in that commodity, that all the world needs

is real christianity, to prepare it, or rather its inhabitants, for one much better. In sober seriousness, this said “tea” illustration is at once the most specious and foolish it has been my fortune to light upon. We are truly told that before the qualities of tea were known, “the old wives of the day served up the boiled leaves as vegetable diet, and threw away the decoction.” Some such mistake the writer would have us believe the “old wives,” or priests of the christian church, have made with respect to christianity. They are charged with uniformly throwing away the decoction or essence of that religion, and as uniformly serving up only its withered, juiceless leaves. There is, however, as I now propose to establish, no analogy whatever between christianity with its priests and the tea with its “old wives,” for whereas tea has, since that period, been proved pleasant and nutritious, christianity has not been proved either the one or the other. There are hardly two opinions as to the excellent qualities of tea. It may almost vie with bread, as regards universality of acceptance. The “decoction” is, in every corner of our island, allowed to be by those who differ most widely on other points, no less beneficial to the body than grateful to the sense. But although christianity was introduced among us long before tea, it has to this hour furnished nothing either useful or pleasant to the body politic. It may be likened to the *boiled leaves* that the old wives of former days served up as vegetable diet. If there were any true analogy between the cases of the tea and the religion—if an argument is to be drawn from our nonconformist’s illustration in favour of *real* christianity, it must first be shown that christianity has been mistakenly used, and that there is in it a sort of latent excellence which may be drawn or squeezed out, by the application of proper means. But, I repeat, it has yet to be proved that christianity, or any other religion may be made to furnish an excellent “decoction” of any kind. Is it not strange that we should in a few years have discovered the excellent properties of tea, while the excellent properties of christianity are still undiscovered, notwithstanding they have been searched for on all sides by men of high talent and influence, who were every way interested in making the discovery? Is it not amazing that during more than eighteen centuries no such discovery has been made? Surely “there is more in this than natural, if philosophy could find it out.”

It may be all very well for writers such as the “Nonconformist” to lay the sins of christianity upon the shoulders of the state, and attribute to “the powers that be” all the strife, bloodshed, and misery of which he acknowledges it to have been the parent—but we have only his bare word for it, that if christianity never had been directly connected with the state, it would in its progress have been less fruitful of mischiefs. The dissenters have always been forward enough to make that connection play scapegoat for all religious abominations. But America furnishes strong reasons for the belief, that if a state religion be a great evil, a religion unbridled by any authority save that of self-seeking priests, is a greater evil. America is overrun by swarms of fierce fanatics, who, like our nonconformist, are seeking to establish *real* christianity. Their camp meetings, revivals, and other monstrous fooleries, teach us what *they* understand by *real* christianity. I am of opinion that “the powers that be” in this country are infinitely preferable in all respects—far less grinding and oppressive than any powers we can reasonably hope to spring from the loins of nonconformity and dissent. The mischievously active christianity of our dissenting population, if armed with authority, would be more dangerous to freedom and happiness than is the lazily-sober religion of churchmen. The frogs of fable who were not content with idle King Log, and prayed Jupiter for another, were favoured by an industrious King Stork, who devoured them for their pains.

No, no, the christian authority we have is quite as good as we can hope any christian authority to be, and when we are fortunate enough to get rid of that, I hope we shall be wise enough to do without any religious authority whatever.

As to what this nonconforming and most real christian writer chooses to say about his religion “not being revealed to be established by the civil authorities,” I can only tell him, in answer thereto, what is, in fact, undeniable, namely, that it has been and is established by the civil authorities, whether revealed for that purpose or not. But pray how can he know for what purpose it was revealed, or how can he know it is revealed at all? And if quite clear upon these points, will he be good enough to explain how it happened that the omnipotent God he worships purposed so many most excellent



things, without being able to accomplish them? Surely a writer who knows so much, or would fain make us believe he does, must have access to information far beyond the reach of ordinary mortals, or how should he know that God never intended christianity to be established by the civil authorities? If there be an omnipotent God, such a presumptuous scribe as this is the blasphemous of his omnipotence—for is it not blasphemy to declare that God revealed a religion which was, in opposition to his wishes or contrary to his intentions, established by human authorities as state religion? I am really amazed that her majesty's attorney-general suffers such writing to pass without reprobation—though I dare say that functionary, and those with whom he is associated in the government, are well assured by this time that such reprobation will do more to aid and strengthen than put down folly. No, such reasoning as this nonconformist's, though specious and plausible, is not likely to seriously damage religion as by law established, so much as religion in general—the cloven foot is too obvious. I know nothing of him personally, but, judging from this specimen of his talents, I should conclude that he was deeply interested in the maintenance of religion—not the state religion, but the religion of his party, the *real, unadulterated, pure christianity*. The bitterness with which he speaks about the small hucksters of "rational opinions" inclines me to think that the promulgators of such opinions have no place in his esteem. But be he what he may, I think it well that all who live by religion, who get their bread by the sweat of fanaticism, should be read and listened to, not prayerfully but suspiciously. The best of men are bad enough, the strongest singularly weak, and experience, that faithful though somewhat harsh monitor, has placed past doubt, that those who profit by creeds or by crabs, will not be in a hurry to spoil the sale of either. To cry "stinking fish" is not expected from the most honest of fishmongers. To cry "false creeds" is surely not what we are justified in expecting to be the employment of those who live by their sale. I am quite persuaded that much less would be written about *state or real christianity*, if such sort of writing were not found to "bring most grist to the mill." It is love of pelf much oftener than love of religion that makes our popular writers wax so eloquent in its praises. His grace the Archbishop of Canterbury pockets directly fifty pounds per day, and indirectly perhaps as much more for his christianity—how much the "Nonconformist" gets for *his* I cannot say. Now the Archbishop of Canterbury would prove himself a very incarnation of disinterestedness, did he let fall a word, or the fiftieth part thereof, in disparagement of the most holy christian religion. Make the "Nonconformist" Archbishop of Canterbury, and the chances are he would see *state christianity* to be something uncommonly like his own *real christianity*. None but madmen can expect that those who profit largely by craft, will be in haste to expose or undermine it. Human nature never was so, and it may fairly be questioned whether it ever will be so. Some sceptics wont give priests in the gross credit for sincerity. I do. I am sure that almost all christian priests, for example, are convinced that their several christian religions have a magically moralising influence. The man who strongly wishes to believe any given proposition, is not far from believing—and upon that principle it is that I account for the average sincerity of priests. They *wish* to believe in the truth and utility of those religions they are amply paid to teach—how then can we marvel that they should generally realise their wish? There are few who can, and fewer still who strive to, discover the immoral tendency of a system or set of opinions which places power, wealth, and honours within their grasp. There are some honest priests, as there are some honest fishmongers—but I repeat, it were folly to expect fishmongers or priests, in the aggregate, will offer up their wares on the altar of integrity. The priest never says society cannot live morally without priests—he is too warily modest for that. He only declares (ingenuous man) that society without *true* religion would be bloodthirsty, dissolute, and abominable. Knowing that where religion is there the priest must be, with a disinterestedness which places the nobility of human nature in a very striking point of view, he makes the pulpit shake and the church ring with denunciations against the irreligious, and dwells with a pathos, enough to melt the heart of a stone, upon the divinely glorious and gloriously divine religion he is authorised to preach. Can we wonder that such a man should

Grunt and groan,  
And curse all systems but his own?

Can we feel astonished that he should be puffed up with conceit the most arrogant, and do all that he is able to stifle investigation, and thereby keep his deluded slaves in their shameful state of voluntary bondage? The famous Godfrey Higgins, in the preface to his "Anacalypsis," observes, that

The more a person inquires, the less he generally believes. This has been often said, and it is unquestionably true. It arises from the fact, he soon discovers, that great numbers of priests in every age, and of every religion, have been guilty of frauds, to support their systems, to an extent of which he could have had no idea until he made the inquiry.

Here we have the true reason why priests in every age have dreaded the advance of knowledge. Just after the invention of printing, an influential priest, whose name I cannot now recall, said, publicly, that if they (the priests) did not put down printing, printing would put them down. A realisation of that prediction will not, perhaps, be seen by the present generation, but its literal fulfilment is morally certain. The printing press is religion's mortal foe, and though the struggle may be long and fierce, who can now doubt on which side victory will determine? Talk of *state* and *real christianity*, indeed, why even the savages of South Africa can teach us wisdom upon such subjects. When Moffatt, the missionary,\* explained christianity to a chief of some tribes, he (the chief) after listening attentively to the divine tale, called about thirty of his men who stood close by to approach, and thus addressed them:

"There is Ra-Mary (father of Mary) who tells me that the heavens were made, the earth also, by a beginner, whom he calls Moruno (among the Bechuana tribes, the name adopted by the missionaries for God, is Moruno), have you ever heard anything to be compared with this?" continued the chief. "He says that the sun rises and sets by the power of Moruno; as also, that Moruno causes winter to follow summer—the winds to blow, the rain to fall, the grass to grow, and the trees to bud"—then, casting his arm above and around him, added—"Moruno works in everything you see or hear. Did you ever hear such words?" Seeing them ready to burst into laughter, he said, "Wait, I shall tell you more; Ra-Mary tells me that we have spirits in us, which will never die, and that our bodies, though dead and burned, will rise and live again. Open your ears to deaf—did you ever hear fables like these?" This was followed by a burst of derisive laughter; and on its partially subsiding, the chief man begged me to say no more on such trifles, lest the people should think me mad.

Whether the missionary or the savages most needed rational instruction, the reader can judge without my assistance. Nevertheless, I cannot but express my decided conviction that christians such as the Bishop of Exeter, or *real christians*, such as the "Nonconformist," might learn much that is valuable from the savages of South Africa.

## CHAPTER ON THE TENDENCY OF IRRELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES.

It is usual for theologians, in their war with irreligionists, to mix up questions of principle with questions of expediency—in other words, to consider, not merely the truth or falsehood of irreligious principles, but the effects likely to result from their general application. These effects, they say, would be most disastrous, and therefore such principles, if proved true, are only calculated to produce mischief—whereas, the very fact that they are likely to be practically pernicious, is something like presumptive evidence against their truth. This is the way many theologians deal with the question, and very much to the satisfaction of themselves and hearers. Nor is the mode particularly objectionable. Men, properly enough value correct practice more than correct thinking. They are more affected by acts than words, by example than by precept. I read in "Hume's History of England," of one Cardinal de Crema, who, in the reign of Henry First, at a synod in London, said it was an unpardonable enormity that a priest should dare to consecrate and touch the body of Christ immediately after he had risen from the side of a strumpet (the decent appellation he gave to the wives of the clergy). But it happened that the very next night, the officers of justice, breaking into a disorderly house, found the cardinal in bed with a courtesan—an incident which Hume remarks threw such ridicule upon him that he immediately stole out of the kingdom, the synods broke up, and the canons against the marriage of clergymen were worse executed than before. Now, though the people of that age knew very little about principles or precepts, their natural sagacity enabled them to understand that a priest who declaimed in public synods

\* See Moffatt's Missionary Life and Labours.



against those of his order who defiled themselves with their wives, ought not himself to have gone immediately after to the bed of a prostitute.

Admitting, then, that we are generally justified in measuring the value of opinions by the conduct commonly pursued by those who hold them, I will proceed to consider whether the advocates of irreligious opinions have so acted as to warrant the inference that such opinions were unsound, or, if sound, not at all calculated to promote the growth of morality and happiness.

Lord Bacon, whose authority will, I suppose, weigh somewhat with the readers, declared that

Atheism leaves a man to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation—all of which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not; but superstition discounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore, atheism did never perturb states—for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no farther—and we see the times inclined to atheism were civil times; but superstition hath been the confusion of many states, and bringeth in a new *prim-moblie* that ravisheth all the sphere of government.

I will now state a *fact*, that is not, though it ought to be, generally known: I allude to the remarkable, and in relation to the present disquisition, very important fact, that all avowed or known atheists have been preeminently distinguished as practical moralists. There have, in modern times more especially, been but few *known* atheists, and fewer yet avowed atheists—but not one of either kind can be mentioned whose whole conduct will not advantageously bear comparison with any other thinker's, either priest or layman. There may, and probably have been, many atheists who have disgraced themselves by immoral acts—but I have not met with, read, or heard of such. Of course, I aver not that rejectors of all religion were absolutely faultless—none are or have been so; but I do aver, and expect to furnish, from time to time, such facts as will compel even the most inveterate stickler for religious belief to admit, that all *known* atheists have been distinguished as men of probity and honour. To begin with some few of the moderns: Benedict Spinoza was a *known*, though not an *avowed*, atheist. Now I find in a note appended by Dugald Stewart to his celebrated Dissertation in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, page 144, the following account of Spinoza:

Some interesting particulars of his (Spinoza's) history may be learnt from a small volume entitled "The Life of Benedict Spinoza, drawn from the writings of that famous philosopher, and from the testimony of many persons worthy of confidence who knew him well; by John Colerus, minister of the Lutheran Church of Haye, 1706." The book is evidently written by a man altogether unfit to appreciate the merits or demerits of Spinoza as an author, but it is not without value to those who delight in the study of human character, as it supplies some chasms in the narrative of Bayle, and has every appearance of the most perfect impartiality and candour.

According to this account, Spinoza was a person of the most quiet and inoffensive manners, of singular temperance and moderation in his passions, contented and happy with an income which barely supplied him with the necessities of life, and of too independent a spirit to accept of any addition to it, either from the favour of princes or the liberality of his friends. In conformity to the law, and to the custom of his ancestors\* (which he adhered to when he thought them not unreasonable, even when under the sentence of excommunication) he resolved to learn some mechanical trade, and fortunately selected that of grinding optical glasses, in which he acquired so much dexterity that it furnished him with what he conceived to be a sufficient maintenance. He acquired also enough of the art of designing to produce good portraits in chalk and china ink of some distinguished persons.

For the last five years of his life he lodged in the house of a respectable religious family, who were tenderly attached to him, and from whom his biographer collected various interesting anecdotes. All of them are very creditable to his private character, and more particularly show how courteous and amiable he must have been in his intercourse with his inferiors. In a bill presented for payment after his death, he is styled by Abraham Keveling, his barber surgeon, *Benedict Spinoza, of blessed memory*; and the same compliment is paid to him by the tradesman who furnished gloves to the mourners at his funeral.

Such was the celebrated atheist, Benedict Spinoza. Professor Stewart (who, by the way, was no favourer of atheism) justly remarks, that "These particulars are the more deserving of notice as they rest on the authority of a very zealous member of the Lutheran communion."

Turn we now to David Hume—perhaps of all metaphysical writers, ancient or modern, the most clear, convincing, and profound. He had the rare merit, so eulogised by Cicero, of enforcing, or rather *insinuating* truths the most abstruse and harsh in soft and transparent diction. Without injustice

it may be affirmed, that his writings display all the elegance and captivating graces of Addison, without his eternal *cant*. As England's historian he is universally known—and now that *faction* is put to silence, almost universally admired. Nevertheless I conceive that, as a philosophical essayist, he is most advantageously distinguished. Gibbon, as a historian, may claim at least equal rank—but I am ignorant that *any* writer has treated questions of religion and morals, as well as of political philosophy, with the ease, the grace, the temper, and the truthfulness of Hume. His "Essays concerning Human Understanding," also "Essays Moral and Political," are deservedly ranked among the most finished and fascinating productions in our language. They abound in those "careless inimitable beauties" that even Gibbon despaired to imitate.\* Sir James Mackintosh, who was no favourer of Hume's philosophy, declared, in the generous *spirit* of enlightened criticism, that "his (Hume's) manner is more lively, more easy, more ingratiating, and, if the word may be applied, more amusing than that of any other metaphysical writer. Of the Moral and Political Essays, the same critic observes: "they must ever be regarded as the best models in any language of the short but full, of the clear and agreeable, though deep, discussion of difficult questions." So much for David Hume's character as a writer; let us now view him in his character of man, as he is drawn by the pencil of a philosophical opponent:†

The private character of Mr. Hume exhibited all the virtues which a man of reputable station under a mild government, in the quiet times of a civilised country, has often the opportunity to practise. He showed no want of the qualities which fit men for severer trials. Though others had warmer affections, no man was a kinder relation, a more unwearied friend, or more free from meanness and malice. His character was so simple that he did not ever affect modesty—but neither his friendship nor his deportment were changed by a fame which filled all Europe. His good-nature, his plain manners, and his active kindness, procured him at Paris the enviable name of "The Good David," from a society not so alive to goodness as, without reason, to place it at the head of the qualities of a celebrated man.

Adam Smith declared that, upon the whole, he had always considered David Hume, both in his life-time and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit—it is therefore manifest that he was no less advantageously distinguished by his virtues as a man than by his talents as a writer.

Now it is well known that Hume was an atheist—a contemner of the God-idea—one who maintained that (I here give his own words), "While we argue from the course of nature a particular intelligent cause, which first bestowed, and still preserves, order in the universe, we embrace a principle that is both uncertain and useless—uncertain, because entirely beyond the reach of human experience—useless, because our knowledge of this cause being derived entirely from the course of nature, we can never, according to my rule of just reason, return back from the cause with any new inferences, or making additions to the common and experienced course of nature, establish any new principles of conduct or behaviour."

This explicit "picture in little" of his views with respect to *unnaturalism*, has been given to the reader in a former number—but I insert it here because it *should be got by rote*, in other words, *committed to memory*, by all those who are desirous to make themselves masters of sound philosophical principles. Besides, some have doubted the atheism of Hume, and as I wished to prove him one, the passage here re-quoted best answered my purpose. The passage in question not only proves him atheistical, but furnishes most excellent reason why all men should set aside empty barren speculations about matters of which they can know nothing, and apply themselves to the business and experience of life.

\* See Gibbon's Memoirs.

† See Second Dissertation prefixed to *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

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\* They were, I believe, Dutch Jews.

# THE INDEPENDENT STAGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

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TWOPENCE.

TO HIS GRACE

## THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

### LETTER IV.

IN my last letter to your grace, I endeavoured to establish, by an appeal to the writings of distinguished christian, no less than pagan philosophers, the important fact, that *God* is a word the meaning of which has not and cannot be agreed upon. The writings in question *prove* the presumption as well as ignorance of those pious and learned men who affect to explain the nature of a Being, which, if it exist at all, is confessedly unnatural. Yes, your grace, the presumptuous ignorance of those who "darken counsel by words without knowledge," and

Give to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name,

is distinctly proved in my last letter, which should not only be read, but answered, by your grace, if you care to rescue the character of theosophers from contempt, or what is, mayhap, of more importance, if you would beat back the hourly increasing army of religion's enemies. You cannot, in fact, hope even to delay the downfall of religion in this country, except by showing the rationality of its fundamental dogma. That dogma is the God dogma—the belief in which cannot be destroyed without at once revolutionising human thought, and involving the spirit, no less than the forms of all religion, in one common ruin.

Your grace's religion, like every other, rests upon the belief that there exists an intelligent Being not part of nature, and therefore unnatural—a Being so immense as to beggar conception—a Being who was before, and will be after, the universe—that Being is called God, and at least a score of other names, which names, as your grace has seen, excite different ideas in different individuals, so that each individual's idea of such supposed Being, is more or less different from every other individual's.

The German Jew\* affirms that "the material world has always furnished the type of the intellectual world," and argues, "it is from what man sees that he creates his opinions upon that which he sees not," propositions I do not expect your grace will call in question; but if all "intellection," as Americans phrase it, must have a material type, in other words, if we have no ideas save those derived from substance and its accidents, whence can come a common idea of God? By common idea, I wish to be understood, an idea such as all who are not blind have of the moon, the sun, or any other visible object. No one has an idea of moon or sun any other than of spherical-shaped bodies, nor are there two opinions as to the pale brightness of the one, or the gorgeous brilliancy of the other. How different are human ideas suggested by the word God, they having scarce anything in common save their absurdity. Who can doubt that your grace's idea of the Being you think created and now governs this universe, is as little like the idea of some christians, as a country clown

is like a well-bred gentleman. This theistical difficulty has been felt by many learned writers on the christian side. Leslie, in his celebrated "Letter to a Friend," exclaims:

Who can think what eternity is? a duration without a beginning, a succession of parts or time; who can so much as imagine or frame any idea of a Being neither made by itself, nor by any other? Of omnipresence—of a boundless immensity—yet all this reason obliges us to allow, as the necessary consequence of a first cause.

Just so. All this we are, as reasonable beings, compelled to admit, as the necessary consequence of a First Cause; a very strong reason, methinks, for doubting the existence of such a cause, but none whatever for crediting it. Well might Leslie, as an atheist, have asked, "Who can so much as imagine or frame any idea of a Being neither made by itself nor by any other;" but such a question from a christian pen could hardly have been expected, for it is a question suggestive of an answer fatal to the idea that such a Being really exists. At all events, the theistical difficulty is placed in so clear a point of view, that the most dull-eyed cannot fail to see and be startled by it. It is easy to conceive that the universe was neither made by itself nor by anything external thereto; which, in point of fact, is precisely what the atheist does conceive; but it is hard indeed, if not impossible, to conceive an intelligent, and of course sentient, Being, "neither made by itself, nor by any other," an "eternal now," whose *volition* created the worlds, whose *volition* governs the worlds, as from their creation it has ever governed them. What thinks your grace—is not a very large measure of faith necessary for those who can believe, not to say understand, so strange a *volition*? Atheists are told by pious poets, to

Use their eyes,  
And having view'd the order of the skies,  
Think, if they can, that matter, blindly hurled,  
Without a guide, should frame this wondrous world.

But even your grace will freely admit, that if a "wondrous world," framed by matter without a guide be wonderful, the self-same world, framed by an omnipresent volition, or intelligence boundlessly immense, is not a whit less wonderful. Besides, the atheist, as your grace should know, does not suppose matter to have been, or to be, hurled, blindly or otherwise. Matter could not have been *hurled* without a *hurler*, any more than nature could have been *designed* without a *designer*. No, your grace, what the atheist *does* think, is, that of necessity something exists, ever has existed, and ever will exist. He thinks matter is that something, because there is nothing else of which he *can* think. He thinks that even that peculiar modification of thought called imagination, cannot help us to an idea of immaterial Beings, supposing there to be such. No, your grace, imagination itself can deal with nothing save realities. It may distort appearances and conjure up phantoms—but let it distort or conjure its best, reality is the source of its nature and action. D'Alembert\* has remarked, that

The imagination is a creative faculty, and the mind, before it attempts to create begins by reasoning upon what it sees and knows. Nor is this all—in the faculty of imagination, both reason and imagination are, to a

\* See "The Existence of Christ Disproved," p. 125.

\* See Discourse prefixed to the French Encyclopædié.



certain extent, combined, the mind never imagining or creating objects, but such as are analogous to the objects whereof it has had previous experience.

If it be thus, if the most vivid or creative of imaginations never creates any objects save such as are analogous to the objects whereof it has had previous experience, I should like your grace to explain how it is possible that any man can think of or imagine a God, neither itself an object nor at all analogous to any object. God is a word meaning something or nothing, if it mean something, then are we bound to conclude God is material; if it mean nothing, then are we equally bound to conclude with Dr. Samuel Clarke, that nothing is the only thing about which everything may be truly denied, and nothing can be truly affirmed.

Now, your grace, it is really a little too bad that christian, and other theists, who will needs have it there must have been a cause for all things, which cause they call final, or uncaused cause, should so grievously misrepresent those who can understand no other causes save natural causes, or effects save natural effects. Final causes, if there be such, are out of nature, and of course distinct from it—but how, in the name of reason, can your grace or any one else get at the slightest knowledge of any other than material causes? To talk of immaterial causes is downright nonsense, it is to utter sounds having far less intelligible sense than the gabble of geese or the braying of asses.

I have been informed that Laplace was asked by Napoleon, why he never extended his views from secondary causes to the First Great Cause. *That*, replied Laplace, does not come within the field of our observation. The reply was worthy of Europe's greatest mathematician. Secondary causes—as they are termed by those who affect great familiarity with a Final Cause—and final causes are the only causes with which men ever have been acquainted. The myriads of volumes which have been written and triumphantly paraded as demonstrations of a Final Cause, are worse than useless—rems of mere hypothesis. In truth, finality doctrine, in relation to causes, is just as stupid and untenable as in relation to politics. Your grace will, no doubt, think differently with respect to both finalities, but my conviction is that you cannot know more than Laplace about a Great First Cause—but if you do know a little about such cause, if it has come within the sphere of your observation, I think your grace has the power to greatly benefit the world, at very small cost. By making us as familiar with the first, or final, causes, as we are with some secondary causes, you will dry up the source of all those vices and mischiefs which spurious beliefs have entailed upon humanity.

Moffat, the indefatigable christian missionary, complains in his "Life and Labours," that the people of South Africa are "covered by the profoundest darkness, inasmuch that after a missionary has endeavored for hours to impart to them a knowledge of a Divine Being, they not unfrequently address to him the question, "What is it you wish to tell me?" Now, I put it to your grace, whether any man could talk in any country for hours together, upon subjects he himself knew anything about, to a number of *willing* listeners, and at the end of his discourse find them in utter ignorance of what he wished to make them understand? I further put it for your grace's consideration, whether the frequenters of our churches and chapels are much profited by the discourses they hear there—whether, in fact, they have not, in a majority of instances, no less reason than the poor abused Africans, to ask their frothy teachers, "What is it you wish to tell me?" I candidly avow to your grace, that with regard to human knowledge of divine things, or Being, I am incredulous, and I am sure that what we don't ourselves know we cannot teach to others. Yet are our parsons at home, and missionaries abroad, employed in no other way, than in stringing sentences together, that have no relation to anything save the sometimes wild, and oftener cunning conceits of the stringers, and produce in almost all cases the most pernicious consequences. According to Moffat, the South Africans freely allowed that what was told them by christians was very wonderful, but they stubbornly insisted that their own fables were as marvellous, and quite as amusing as the christians—of which fact I have not the least doubt.

But your grace shall not have to complain that I throw all the odium of such insane proceedings upon the preachers of christian doctrine. No, such a course would be unjust—when the truth stares me in the face, that our most scientific men of science, do publicly set forward as indisputable, nay,

divine truth, doctrines that no self-respecting Hottentot would foul his lips by uttering. These men's doings will come under review hereafter, when I promise your grace not to spare them. My chief aim in this letter is to place before you such arguments as may convince your understanding that if there be a First Cause, in other terms, an unnatural Being, who created the universe, it is impracticable to show that there is by solid arguments. My strong, and, I think, invulnerable position is, that though there may be a universal Final Cause, no human brain can form any proper conception of such cause, and therefore it is impertinent in any man or men to set up as God expounders, in other words, to thrust themselves forward as explainers of what is inexplicable. This, your grace, is one position you must master, before you can hope to master me. When you prove to my satisfaction, by reasoning drawn from indisputable facts, that the most learned of christian men knew either more or less of a First Cause, than the veriest ignoramus that ever drew breath, I promise to abandon all opposition to christianity, so far as the first line of Genesis is concerned.

Dr. Buckland has written upon the Final Cause question, but such is the marked peculiarity of his reasonings, that a study of them left me much farther from orthodox convictions than they found me. In one of his books (the "Bridge-water Treatise," if I remember rightly) he observes that,

Although it be dangerous hastily to have recourse to final causes, yet since in many branches of metaphysical science (more especially in those which relate to organised matter) the end of many a contrivance is better understood than the contrivance itself, it would surely be as unphilosophical to hesitate at the admission of final causes, when the general tenor and evidence of the phenomena naturally suggest them, as it would be to introduce them gratuitously, unsupported by such evidence.

Now, what does all this amount to? I will tell your grace what *I* think it amounts to, and that is, just nothing. Who, in the name of wonder, *can* hesitate at the admission of a Final Cause, *when* the general tenor and evidence of the phenomena naturally suggests them. Dr. Buckland might as well have said, it is wrong for a man not to believe without hesitation there is a God, after he has been convinced by sufficient evidence that there is one. It is plain, if the general tenor and evidence of the phenomena naturally suggest the admission of Final Causes, such causes would naturally be believed in. But your grace knows there are, and have been, very many men of ripe judgment and great abilities, who have thought with Laplace a First Great Cause, if such a cause there is, does not come within the field of our observation. But your grace, let us suppose for a moment that the universe *was* caused by God, the Final Cause, and we shall see that so far from satisfying reason, we confuse and bewilder it—for if the universe was caused by something, that something must have been superior and prior to the universe. Surely a cause equal to the production of such an effect as the visible world, offers no fewer obstructions to human conception of its vastness, mode of being, and essential attributes, than the world itself, of which we know little, it is true, but let it not be forgotten that of God we know absolutely nothing.

The presumed first cause of the universe is not only called God, and many other curious names, mentioned in my last letter, but also such as "Universal Architect," "Great Engineer," &c., which terms plainly indicate that those who use them have no conception of their first cause than as an exceeding skilful artist; others, however, deny that God was properly an artist, as Harris, in his amusing "Dialogue Concerning Art," contained in the first part of his celebrated treatises. In the Dialogue referred to he says:

No events in what we call the *natural world* must be referred to art; such as tides, winds, vegetation, gravitation, attraction and the like. For these all happen by stated laws, by a curious necessity, which is not to be withstood and where the nearer and immediate cause appears to be unconscious. In the next place, we must exclude all those admired works of the animal world, which for their beauty and order we metaphorically call artificial. The spider's web, the bee's comb, the beaver's house, and the swallow's nest, must all be referred to another source, for who can say these ever learnt to be ingenious, or that they were ignorant by nature, and knowing only by education. Not even that Divine Power which gave form to all things, then acted by art, when it gave that form, for that intelligence which has all-perfection, ever in energy, cannot be supposed to have any power, not original to its nature. How can it ever have anything to learn, when it knows all from the beginning? or being perfect and complete, admit of what is additional and secondary? Art, therefore, can never be numbered among God's attributes; for all art is something learnt, something secondary and acquired, and never original to any Being which possesses it.

I gather from this reasoning, that all-perfect intelligence,

such as your grace and christians in general confidently assure us your God has, or rather is, cannot be properly an artist, therefore such names as *Mechanic of the Universe, Divine Architect, Perfect Engineer, &c.*, are altogether improper. Surely the eternal now, with not only power to give form, but being, to all things could not have derived power from any superior or extraneous source. If we can imagine an omnipotent, omnipresent, and eternal now, the conclusion is inevitable that all its attributes must be "original to its nature." But will your grace aver that imperfect man can have a just idea of all-perfection? If your grace will aver such obviously false propositions, I shall in charity conclude that your zeal for christianity has corrupted your reasoning faculties. Plutarch, Bacon, and many other illustrious philosophers, have told us, it is far better not to think of God at all than to entertain unworthy ideas of him. Well, then, unless your grace think differently, unless you are of opinion it is better men should reason unworthily of God, rather than not reason or think about him at all, you are morally bound to denounce all attempts to teach or learn what God is, or to prove by well grounded arguments, that the christians' idea of God is worthy, "of that intelligence which has all perfection," an intelligence "having nothing to learn," because "it knew all from the beginning"—not an artist, for who can say of such a God, that "he learnt to be ingenious, or that he was ignorant by nature, and knowing only by education?" Your grace, I repeat, is morally bound to denounce all attempts to teach or learn anything whatever of such a God, or setting aside all impediments thrown in your way, by prejudice and custom, at once attempt to prove that christians can and do teach worthy ideas of him. One or other of these courses your grace must take, or incur the charge of inconsistency and cowardice. That it is far better not to judge at all than to judge erroneously of any Being, I am quite sure, and what I call upon your grace to make plain is, that any human creature can judge in any other than an erroneous manner of a Being whose worshippers themselves allow is incomprehensible—a Being whose "ways are not as our ways"—a Being, in fine, whose whole nature is a negation of everything natural.

In justice to myself I must inform your grace that I am not ignorant how little I am justified by individual authority in taking this line of objection to the christian and all other religions—but truth to tell, the authority of common sense weighs with me more than any other authority whatever. No less a saint than Athanasius taught, as unquestionable fact, that there is in nature but one order for all things, that we ought to conclude there is but one God, artist, and ordainer, and from the unity of the work deduce that of the workman. Now, I hope it has been shown in this letter, how thoroughly foolish it is to speak of God as an artist or ordainer—so, passing that by as disposed of, I beg to tell your grace that, though we have it upon the authority of Saint Athanasius, that there is but one God, that the universe is his work, and that from the unity of this presumed work, we are warranted in concluding the unity of its worker or workman—I prefer the authority of common sense, which tells us absolutely nothing about universal works, universal unities, or, indeed, anything universal. The authority of common sense does not justify any man, be he saint or sinner, in teaching, as unquestionable truth, the very doubtful proposition, that the world is a work of which some unnatural Being was the worker. Nor can the authority of common sense be cited in support of the belief that the universe, if a work, is the production of only one workman—and without designing to affront, I will say, that I prefer the authority of common sense, even to your grace's, backed though it may be, by that of all the christian saints, from Peter downwards. Of course it is not impossible that your grace may speedily enable me to see these propositions in a different light—but I think it very improbable. Nevertheless, you are imperatively called upon, as high-priest of christianity, to make the attempt.

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

## PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT.

### I.

DEAN SWIFT was of opinion that government is a very simple thing, and lies within the capacity of many heads. I much question the soundness of that opinion. My conviction is, that the machinery of government is far from simple, and that few heads, indeed, are capacitated to understand its principles of motion, or the complicated apparatus of cogs, springs, wheels, and balancing forces, by which such motion is effected. Watch-making is a fine art, requiring skill, perseverance, experience, and complete knowledge of metals, on the part of those artists who would excel in it; but the art of governing well, is a finer art than watch-making. The statesman needs more skill, more perseverance, and infinitely more experience than the watchmaker; and if the latter should have a complete knowledge of metals, the former should have a perfect knowledge of men. Yes, only those who know men thoroughly, can govern them wisely. They must know, not their names, persons, and professions merely, but their habits, modes of thinking, as well as acting, their prejudices, passions, inconsistencies, in brief, their whole nature, with all its loveable, no less than its hateful, qualities.

The greatest of Swedish ministers said to his son, "Go forth, my son, and see with how little wisdom the world is governed;" but we must not make the mistake of supposing this little wisdom *well* governs the world. The world is vilely governed. The avowed object of all government is the happiness of the governed—the real object is the security and welfare of the governors. Like the Venetians of a former age, the people are at this moment cheated with a semblance of justice and liberty, while the substance is ingeniously held from them. How little, indeed, is the wisdom with which the world is governed.

But this state of things cannot much longer continue. There are sundry indications that revolution is coming upon us with gigantic strides—a revolution that will cast all former revolutions into the shade—a revolution of principles and practices—not a mere unsettling or shifting of governmental forms—a revolution of reason, not passion, that, once achieved, will seal the fate of kingcraft, lordcraft, and priestcraft—a revolution that will unuzzle the ox who treadeth out the corn, while fastening the jaws of those beasts who now disdain to do ought save devour it.

There must be in every nation a government of some kind or other—but it is manifestly the interest of the governed, to be governed as little, and at as little expence, as possible. *Pas trop gouverner*,\* is a good maxim, well worthy of being popularised. All superfluous governing is so much tyranny—but aristocratic and sacerdotal legislation, can only flourish amid the general wreck of liberty. Europe is, at this moment overrun by a huge army of spies and informers, the indispensable adjuncts of that infernal system of legislation. There are, besides spies and informers, at least one million of men at present under arms in Europe, whose business it is to over-awe the multitude of slaves, and "mow them down in masses," if necessary.

Milton declared that the trappings of a monarchy cost more than an ordinary republic—but the cost of monarchy, in a *monetary* sense, is a mere bagatelle—its cost, in a *moral* sense, constitutes one of the most important items in national calculation. The salary a king or queen receives for doing nothing, perhaps, save play the doll or fool, publicly and privately, is but a drop in the ocean of degradation and destitution to which kingship or queenship gives birth. The queen of these realms is directly and indirectly in the annual receipt of, perhaps, no less than one million pounds sterling. By the constitution (if any one can tell what that is) she can do no wrong. Indeed, the less she does, either of right or wrong, the better fitted she is to be a monarch. Our queen is, I think, just as good a queen as we could have, seeing that she is evidently more disposed to play queen Log than queen Stork—but bad is the best, and for this reason the principle of monarchy is a slavish and degrading principle—a principle that originated in ages of barbarism and blood—when the sword, not the pen, swayed the destinies of empires. Monarchs, now, are esteemed rather for what they

\* Literally—"Not too much governed."



prevent, than for what they do—it being of not the slightest consequence who fills the throne, so that it be filled without the necessity of violent party struggles. Monarchs have no weight in any civilized countries. Few seem to care what kings say or what they do, provided always they meddle not too much with the liberties of those they are still allowed, with slavish courtesy, to call their subjects. The truth is, that in England, France, and some continental states, civilisation is rapidly advancing to a point which, when arrived at, will supersede old principles and plans of government, by others far more in harmony with itself. It is ridiculous to suppose that the nations of Europe will always be governed upon the monarchical principle. That principle did well enough when priests were the only teachers of the people, and swayed both kings and subjects—when the talent enabling a man to read and write was so extremely rare, that many of the priests themselves could do neither—when a large majority of the privileged aristocratic classes were in a like predicament, and not at all ashamed to make their mark—when if a man could write his name he was allowed benefit of clergy, which means, that if he had committed murder, or any other crime, however odious, his life was spared; it not being allowable to put the clergy to death, in early ages, on any pretence, and the capacity of writing was long considered as belonging only to the clerical order—when as much money was sometimes paid for an odd folio, as would have purchased a moderate estate—and when the divine right of monarchs was altogether beyond dispute. Can any one imagine, for a single instant, that the principles of government *then* in vogue are the principles upon which the people of England should *now* be governed? Yet, the fact that we are governed in harmony with such principles is unquestionable, and a momentous fact it is. It is true that the queen of these realms dare not assume the haughty airs or play off those tyrannous tricks, so safely assumed and played off by her predecessors. King James the First, openly declared that the pleasure of scratching himself where he itched, was a pleasure too great for a subject. Now, I doubt whether Queen Victoria's throne would be worth a year's purchase, were she to speak so majestically of her "subjects."

The celebrated Junius thought that the divine right of beauty is the only right an Englishman ought to acknowledge, and a pretty woman the only tyrant he is not authorised to resist. My own opinion is, that no pretty woman or pretty man either, should be so placed as to have the *will* or the *power* to play the tyrant. It is monstrous that the welfare and liberties of a people should be in the smallest degree affected by the caprice or pranks of any individual—but under a monarchical system how is this to be avoided? Not to speak of the pernicious influence the gingerbread-puppetry of our monarchs cannot fail to have, I cannot see how a monarch, *as such*, can be ought but a foe to the people's advancement in liberty and intelligence. The monarch necessarily stands in a similar relation to the subject, as the priest to the cringing devotee. A monarch has little to fear from *false* knowledge—but I maintain that the universal or even general diffusion of *true* political knowledge is incompatible with the existence of monarchical institutions. The general diffusion of sound political knowledge will inevitably destroy both kingcraft and priestcraft—how then can we expect that either kings or priests should really desire such knowledge to be diffused? It were idle to expect any individual or sections of individuals to voluntarily abdicate those functions, which, however pernicious to the common weal, are to themselves the never-failing sources of emolument and honour. If men were governed under republican forms and in a republican spirit, the wounds of society would speedily be healed up, and sentiments the most exalting and noble pervade the breasts of all men. Without being visionary enough to look for a nation of philosophers, during this generation at all events, such as Aristippus conceived philosophers ought to be, namely, men that with or without laws would live exactly in the same manner—I think we are justified in looking forward to a period when political inequality shall cease, and no laws be enacted in any state save those in perfect harmony with the honestly expressed will of the majority composing such state. It is vain for statesmen to attempt to blink or burk the fact, that to republican institutions, based on a widely-diffused democratic spirit, all societies must come at last. No individual politician can greatly retard or greatly accelerate the republican movement, and when I hear some of our politicians make such a fuss about what they do, have done, and are

going to do, I am reminded of the vain fly in the fable, who lodged upon the axle of a fast-turning wheel, cried out, "Why what a dust do we make." The fly's mistake consisted in fancying that he turned the wheel, while he only went round with it, which is just the mistake of these fussy politicians—who, self-deluded men, have a notion that they move the state-wheel, whereas, like the fly, they do but go round with it.

That at present the governed are unripe, though gradually ripening, for a larger measure of freedom, is a truism, than the which there is no one of more importance, or may be more confidently relied on by the politician. An able modern writer\* has said:

Revolution under liberal chiefs, who (better informed than the masses) felt the new wants, have always failed, because the masses did not understand the *new wants*; but when knowledge, generally diffused, shall have modified all the people, then will public opinion be so loud and so general that happy changes will take place *without leaders*, and therefore without convulsions or bloodshed. Hence, reform in the education of the masses is the first and most important duty of those who suffer from injustice, towards others.

Granting all this to be unquestionable verity, and verity of immense importance I hold it certainly is, it suggests the absolute necessity of making the masses understand the *new wants*, experience having sufficiently proved that happy and bloodless changes can only be brought about by masses so well-instructed as not to need, and therefore without, leaders. Leaders of the people have been, in all ages, either victimisers or victims. When in advance of the *mobile vulgus*, the bold and honest politician has been almost invariably sacrificed by them. The people cheer such leaders on to battle, but desert them in the fight. When, on the other hand, the *mobile vulgus* are in advance of their leaders, these latter are the worst plagues ever generated amid the feculence of politics. More mischief is done by such laggloly *leaders* (as they call themselves, but *followers* as they ought to be called) of the masses, than by any other single cause. Truly the education of the masses is the first and most important duty of those who suffer from injustice, towards others. A well-educated people would neither submit to be led nor driven—but the people of England are not well educated, for they are both led and driven, at the will as well of those who govern them by, as those who govern them against, their will.

Milton, in his "Reformation in England," thus sketches a modern politician:

This is the masterpiece of a modern politician—how to qualify and mould the sufferance and subjection of the people, to the length of that foot which is to tread upon their necks; how rapine may serve itself with the fair and honorable pretence of public good; how the puny law may be brought under the wardship and control of lust and will; in which attempt if they fall short, then must a superficial colour of reputation by all means, direct or indirect, be gotten to wash over the unsightly greyness of honour. To make men governable in this manner, their precepts mainly tend to break a national spirit and courage, by countenancing open riot, luxury, and ignorance, till having thus disfigured, and made men beneath men, as Juno in the fable of Io, they deliver up the poor transformed heifer of the commonwealth to be stung and vexed by the breeze and goad of oppression, under the custody of some Argus with a hundred eyes of jealousy. To be plainer, sir, how to sadden, how to stop up a leak, how to keep up the floating carcass of a crazy and diseased monarchy or state, betwixt wind and water, swimming still upon her own dead lees—that now is the design of a politician.

This is strong language, but if the politicians of Milton's time bore any very striking resemblance to those of our own, it was by no means too strong. The fashion now is to denounce imposture, or vice in general, in such "holiday and lady terms," that whether it be or be not denunciation is not always quite clear. What Curran called "braided language, laid on with all the delicacy of millinery," is much admired by the political beaux and belles of this improving country. Our politicians seem far more particular with respect to what they say, and much less particular as to what they do, than in the times of Milton or Sydney. Whether particularity of language will recompense society for what it loses by general recklessness of action, may fairly be questioned. I have a lively conviction that it is of little consequence how men speak if they do not act well—an honest thought, which is an honest act's prelude, being just as valuable in the roughest, as in the most refined, garb. It was the strong language of Milton that most effectually helped to establish a republic in this country. To the plain, nervous sense of Paine, as plainly and nervously expressed, the Americans owe

\* See "Serious Thoughts, generated by perusing Lord Brougham's Discourse on Natural Theology," by a Student in Realities.

their most glorious of revolutions. To strong speeches and strong writings the people of England owe every atom of political good they now enjoy. When, in the world's history, were revolutions compassed, republican principles established, or any noble end what-ever achieved by *litterateurs*, by politicians whose weak stomachs cannot digest strong phrases. In truth, these *exquisite* regenerators of our mad world, forcibly remind one of Hot-pur's immortal dandy, who so loved *la vie militaire*, that but for vile guns would himself have been a soldier. The regenerators of the republican school of exquisites, are as enamoured of radically revolutionising, as the said dandy was of fighting; but then they don't like vile prisons, where smelling-bottles are not allowed, clothes spoiled, and ringlets, *a la Absolom*, may be most mercilessly cropped. These fine gentlemen highly relish the *swaiver in modo*, which means the most finished style of political politeness, the *fortiter in re* being left to such vulgarly reckless writers as Paine, who could sooner eat their fingers than write exquisitely. Yet, I much doubt, whether, if Paine had written his "Crisis," "Common Sense," "and Rights of Man," in the pulingly mystical style of our Jack-a-dandy politicians, America would have been excited so far as to throw off, in the face of what pale-spirited politicians would call appalling dangers, the hateful domination of the parent-country, and instead of being, as she at this moment is, a great and flourishing republic, she would have been a mere dependancy of Great Britain, a wretched colony governed by laws and usages the most atrociously oppressive. To the writings of the much vilified Paine, America is chiefly indebted for her present high position among the nations, and it is to the eternal disgrace of her children, that he who, as a politician, was "the foremost man of all this world"—he to whom they owed everything, even the desire of liberty, should by those very children have his memory loaded with contumely and reproach. But, alas, republican America, like monarchial England, is overrun by fanatics, who, under cover of christianity, as they call it, blunt the noblest feelings, pollute the clearest understandings, and unceasingly war with every form or kind of rational freedom. Who would look for generous hearts in such bosoms, or wonder that he who penned the "Age of Reason," should be hated by a nation of religious fanatics? Religious fanatics are incapable of gratitude to those who aim at the destruction of fanaticism, and had Washington, instead of Paine, written the "Age of Reason," none would have heard from the lips of christian fanatics terms of grateful praise for the immense benefits he had conferred upon his country.

The "Rights of Man," is, perhaps, the best, as it was the first complete, exposition, that had appeared in any age or country, of sound principles of government. Those who have well studied that will find little that has since been written calculated to improve their knowledge of republican politics. I therefore strongly recommend the "Rights of Man," as a book no politician should fail to be perfect master of. Thoroughly convinced that the republican principle of government is the only sound or safe principle, and that it must ultimately triumph over all other, it is my anxious desire that the *mobile vulgus* should be made to understand that principle. No man can rightly appreciate things or principles, however valuable, that he has no clear conception of. I believe the people at large have, as yet, no clear or adequate conception of republican politics. They do not in the aggregate now see how nations may be well governed by all, for the greatest good of all—in other words, they do not see the principle and aim of republican government.

## ESSAY ON THE IDEA OF POWER.

The powers, properties, or qualities of a substance are not to be regarded as anything superadded to the substance, or distinct from it; they are only the substance, considered in relation to various changes that take place when it exists in peculiar circumstances.—Dr. BROWN.

THE idea that there is *power*, distinct from *substance*, is very generally entertained. Few indeed, even among writers professedly atheistical, have thought with Dr. Brown that powers, properties, or qualities of a substance, are not to be regarded as anything distinct from it, but only the substance itself "considered in relation to various changes that take place when it exists in peculiar circumstances." Even the late

Richard Carlile, whose heterodoxy was of an ultra stamp, seems to have believed in the existence of a power, though he condemned those who associated moral attributes with that power. In his first communication to the Rev. J. B. Emmet, page 7 of "The Prompter," these words occur: "I question the propriety of associating moral attributes with that physical power called God; *which we all alike allow to be supreme, universal.*" This is not the language of atheism. No atheist could have penned it; and it is precisely because Richard Carlile was not an atheist, that he did pen it. Atheists, properly so called, do not question the propriety of associating moral attributes with that physical power called God, for this most excellent reason—they do not admit the existence of anything save matter:

For only matter can be touch'd, or touch;  
Tangere enim et tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

They are not to be included among the "all" who "alike allow that physical power called God to be supreme and universal."

Robert Owen, like Richard Carlile, has often been charged (and that most unjustly) with atheism. The reader may take my word for it, that Robert Owen is quite innocent of atheism. He is no more atheistical than are North American Indians. They adore the great spirit or power of the universe. He assures us *there is* such a great spirit or power, and promises that in the "New Moral World," all shall be allowed to worship that spirit or power, in the manner most agreeable to their consciences not interfering with equal rights in others. It really is very unjust to charge either Robert Owen, Richard Carlile, or the North American savages with atheism, for "they all alike allow power to be supreme and universal;" they all alike allow, too, that it "moves the atom and controls the aggregate of nature."

David Hume, who was an atheist, thus writes in his "Essay of the Idea of Power:"

When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operations of causes, we are never able in any single instance to discover any power or necessary connection, any quality which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the outward senses. The mind feels no sentiment or inward impression from this succession of objects; consequently, there is nothing in any single particular instance of cause and effect, which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connection. . . . . In reality, there is no part of matter that ever does, by its sensible qualities, discover any power or energy, or give us ground to imagine that it could produce anything, or be followed by any other object, which we could denominate its effect. . . . We know that, in fact, heat is a constant attendant of flame; but what is the connexion betwixt them, we have no room so much as to conjecture or imagine. 'Tis impossible therefore that the idea of power can be derived from the contemplation of bodies in single instances of their operation, because no bodies ever discover any power, which can be the original of the idea.

Such is the language of atheism. Theists assure us,\* that the unwearied motion of an infinite number of worlds distributed throughout space, is sustained by power, which power, strange to say, is declared to be "the fundamental idea of a belief in God." Stranger still, this power, though not allowed by its worshippers to be matter or substance, is pronounced omnipresent. We are positively assured it props up everything, though not itself anything, is everywhere, without occupying an inch of space, and infinite with regard to the extent of its operations.

The word *omnipresent* means *everywhere*, now, that which is everywhere leaves no room for anything else. If then the power God of Messrs. Owen, Carlile, and Mackintosh is *omnipresent*, as they *know* it is, why, it incontestably follows that there is no substance in existence, for substance (however small the quantity) must occupy some space, if so, wherever it exists it necessarily excludes that God we are told by theistical sages is everywhere. It is clearly impossible that two atoms, however small, can at the same moment occupy the same point of space, therefore, if power is not substance, yet universal, it follows either that power is not an existence, but simply a word intended to convey an idea of substance, "considered in relation to various changes that take place when it exists in peculiar circumstances," or that there is no substance—power being everything, and everything power—a conclusion I do not expect many of my readers will arrive at.

\* See "A Dissertation on the Being and Attributes of God," by T. Simons Mackintosh, p. 26.



But, should this class of theists, driven to desperation by such tremendous difficulties, attempt to shield the power called God, they "all alike allow to be supreme and universal," by denying, as did Bishop Berkeley, the reality of an external world; why from frying-pan into fire they go—for it must be allowed that, without an external world, all arguments in proof of Gods, or their attributes, rest on a nothingness foundation. The acute David Hume did not fail to perceive this:

If the external world be once called in doubt, we shall be at a loss to find arguments by which we may prove the existence of God or any of his attributes.

This sentence of his seems decisive against those who, like Bishop Berkeley, aimed at obtaining a "cheap and easy triumph over materialists," by "expelling matter out of nature." How can there be arguments *a priori*, *a posteriori*, or any other *iori*, if all we touch, taste, see, and hear, or rather *think* we touch, taste, see, and hear, is imaginary? Surely an imaginary universe, if created at all, must have had an imaginary deity for Creator. Now, to an imaginary Deity, atheists don't object in the least. If theists are prepared to admit that their God is an imaginary Being, why atheists will heartily agree with them. It does appear, therefore, that the believers in a universal power are bound to show either the possibility of there being *two* omnipresences in one universe, or to show how such power, "called God," can fill all space, except they take Berkeley's advice, "and expel matter out of nature." It is of no consequence, so far as this theistical proposition is concerned, how much or how little matter there may be. If there is any matter there cannot be a supreme and universal power. Though the universe could be brought within the compass of a walnut-shell, or squeezed into a lady's thimble, as some have thought it might, still such a bit of a universe would necessarily destroy the universality of anything else. Dr. Arnott, in his "Elements of Physics, or Natural Philosophy," says, page 10, of part I., that

The inconceivable minuteness of ultimate atoms, has led some inquirers to doubt whether there really be *matter*; that is to say, whether what we call substance or matter have any existence or not. In answer to this it has been usual to adduce, besides the proofs of indestructibility already mentioned, and which seem conclusive, the fact already mentioned, that every kind or portion of matter obstinately occupies some space, to the exclusion of all other matter from that particular space.

It is much to be regretted that power-God-theists should give their "deified error" so many names. Of course, names are of small consequence, if we agree with regard to things, but, unluckily, the many and contradictory names so freely used by them, confuse rather than enlighten us as to the omnipresent power called sometimes God, sometimes fundamental idea of a God, sometimes universal principle, sometimes one silly name, and sometimes another, until the weary reader is utterly disgusted as well as befuddled. I have now lying before me a short letter on the God question, written by a theist of this worthy school, in which God is first defined as an omnipresent power, then he is called the governing principle, and, a little lower down, an "intelligent Being." Now, evidently, *power* is not a governing principle, or principle of any kind, nor can either *power* or *principle* be tortured into a Being. If there is a God, he may be a principle, or a Being, or a power, but he cannot be all three at once. Such a Deity, were it conceivable, would beat the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all the world to nothing. A principle is, in point of fact, no more a being, than colour or motion are roses and steam-ships. As well might we call sound a being, addressing it as Mr. or Mrs. Sound, as confuse principles with existences. If God is a governing principle, he or it cannot be a being of any kind. Principles are not things, but names given to certain conclusions, which conclusions are consequences of our own or others experience of the relations and essential nature of things; in other words, principles are conclusions, consequent upon certain states of beings—not beings themselves. Between calves' heads and turkey cocks there are some analogies, some similitudes, but what similarity, what analogy can be traced between something and nothing, or material nature and the phenomena it displays? The word principle is expressive of a given mental result, and no more conveys the idea of positive existence, than do the words motion, space, time, colour, or sound. The same remark holds of *power*, which is nowhere, is neither tangible to feeling, sight, or any other sense. If we consider the word *power* not as a thing "superadded to substance, or

distinct from it, but only the substance itself, considered in relation to various changes that take place when it exists in peculiar circumstances"—then it is a word of distinct and definite signification; but to erect power into a God, to speak of it as an omnipresent existence, apart from, yet sustaining, regulating, and controlling all substance, is sheer madness. The notion of such a *power* is altogether imaginary and mischievous. I class it as notional, not ideal, believing with Hume, "no bodies ever discover any power which can be the original of the idea."

Power, distinct from substance or superadded to it, is altogether inconceivable. Now, it is admitted, on all hands, that what is inconceivable can never be properly the SUBJECT, though it may be the OBJECT, of reasoning. Nothing can be pronounced either true or false, the principles of which are not compassed by the pronouncer. How is it possible a sound reason can be advanced in favour of any opinion, which, like the opinion in respect of an omnipresent, supreme, and universal power, is embraced and clung to in the very teeth of all the principles upon which alone just reasoning can be founded?

Robert Owen, and others of the power-God school, do not even condescend to allow that they may be altogether wrong upon this question. He declares, he *knows* there is a power *in* nature to do what is done *by* nature. He says, the facts are yet unknown to man which will enable us to decide what that power is, but I say, the facts are as yet, and ever will remain, unknown to man, which could alone justify any one in declaring such *power* exists. Is it not obvious, that to declare there is a power *in* nature which directs and controls it, is neither more nor less in effect, than declaring that there is a power, and that there is a nature; in other words, a God distinct from, yet unceasingly acting upon, and governing the universe? Now, no atheist admits this; no *bona fide* atheist can admit such groundless assumption—no atheist admits the existence of anything but matter—no atheist admits there is power *in* nature, either as a whole, or in its parts—but he readily grants that every atom of the universe does exhibit power as well as other phenomena.

That men, in general, have power, when they have will to walk, is undeniable, but it would be preposterous for any one to stop a troop of pedestrians, and say to them, gentlemen, you probably think your bodies walk, but no such thing, it is not you, but a power *in* you that walks. You (this imaginary philosopher might continue), understanding little about metaphysics, foolishly suppose that body can walk or think; but such a supposition is most profane. No, there is, I repeat, a power *in* you, and not you yourself that walks or thinks. Be assured there is a thinking principle, and moving power, in man, as there unquestionably is a thinking principle, and moving power, in nature.

Now, I maintain that there are no facts to justify the assertion of Richard Carlile, as to all alike allowing the existence of a supreme and universal power, called God; or the assertion of Robert Owen, that there is a power which moves the atom and controls the aggregate of nature; or the double and doubly nonsensical assertion of T. S. Mackintosh, that God is an omnipresent power, and that we know God governs the universe by fixed laws. All these, I maintain, are worthless, stupid assertions, the facts being, that we do not all alike allow the existence of a supreme and universal power called God—that we, at best, can only guess there is a power moves the atom and controls the aggregate of nature—finally, that no man can positively know either that there is an omnipresent power, or that such power, supposing it to exist, governs the universe by fixed laws.

With a few words more, intended as illustrative of the fallacious ideas commonly attached to the word power, I shall conclude this essay.

A moment's reflection will convince any one, that it is no nearer philosophical propriety to say fire has power to burn wood, or warm air to melt snow, than it would be to say wood has the power to be burnt, or the snow power to be melted; as there is no known power in matter at all, it follows that the proposition, there is power in matter cannot be proved by any process of reasoning. We know from experience that flame burns wood, that heat melts snow, in the same, and no other way, that we know water quenches thirst, and food stays the cravings of hunger. The moon moves through its path or orbit once in a given number of days; but it is ridiculous to assert there is power *in* the moon pushing it along. All we know is, that the moon moves, and

there I conceive our knowledge ends. What would be thought of an individual who took pains to prove there is a power in the Regent-street lamp posts, making them stick where they are? It is likely he would be suspected of hallucination, and yet, in point of truth, there is just as much a power in the posts, fixing them where they are, as there is in the moon, enabling it to accomplish its monthly journeys. To say, man has power to walk, birds power to fly, and fishes power to swim, is well enough; but it is not well, it is impertinently foolish to declare there is a power in man that walks, a power in birds to fly, a power in fishes to swim, and, as a sort of climax to the grossest of absurdities, there is a power in nature to perform all natural operations.

## SOCIALIST BOOKS AND SOCIALIST DOCTRINE.

Nothing extenuate, nor ought set down in malice.—OLD PLAY.

MR. ROBERT OWEN'S "Essays on the Formation of Character," first published in 1812, rank among the most plain, convincing, and useful, I ever read. They contain, perhaps, the best exposition of socialist principles anywhere to be met with. Nearly all Mr. Owen's other productions abound in those specious generalities, under which so many and fatal errors lurk, and are open to serious objections on the score of verbal inaccuracies, and philosophical mistakes; but his thirteen essays on "The Formation of Character," in my judgment, approximate as closely to perfection, as anything "that little agitation of the brain men call thought" has produced. I write from "old memory," not having seen the essays in question these three years past—but the impression made upon me by a first reading, some thirteen or fourteen years ago, will not be speedily effaced. I judged then—and time has not disturbed that judgment—no man of ordinary sagacity could attentively read, with a view to understand, those essays, and not be morally benefited, if not convinced, by the beautifully lucid statement of truths therein contained.

Socialist opinions have suffered the fate of all systematised and systematically advocated opinions. In common with all such, they have been much injured by weak, inefficient, spurious advocacy. They have, to my certain knowledge, suffered infinitely more from injudicious friends, than from their open and bitterest enemies. The principles of socialism, whether true or false, are at least simple, and when taught in an intelligent, honest spirit, may easily be understood even by children; but, unluckily, socialist champions—sometimes from feelings of vanity, sometimes from motives of what they choose to call expediency, sometimes from views immediately connected with their own aggrandisement, and sometimes from all three combined—have shrunk from the full expression of truth, or so dressed it up in the language of foppery and mysticism, that neither the principles nor proposed practice of socialism are yet rightly understood by any classes of society.

Those who, like the socialist missionaries, professed to teach truth without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man, should have been specially careful so to state their principles and explain their system, that none could easily mistake the character of either—but, alas! taken in the lump, they have furnished the world with a perfect illustration of Dryden's remark, that our language seldom displays the form of our thoughts, more than breeches and petticoats truly exhibit the form of our bodies.

It is really staggering to reflect, how much socialism has suffered in popular estimation, from the loose, unscientific, random style, in which everything connected with it has been explained, or rather obscured; and before proceeding to set down any remarks on socialism's fundamental doctrine, it may be useful to furnish an example of the sort of teaching here rallied against.

Every frequenter of socialist institutions must have observed that there is, or used to be, conspicuously placed in large letters, the following sentence—"The character of man is formed for and not by him"—a sentence not merely placed by socialists in shining capitals, where they may be observed by all observers, but also in great request among the authorised expounders of their system—more especially the *novices*, who use it upon all convenient occasions.

Now I cannot but think it a very silly sentence, nay, more than silly, it is positively false, and most unquestionably has been "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence" to thousands of intelligent, truth-seeking individuals. I will, therefore, briefly expose its hollowness.

In an "Outline of the Rational System," drawn up, I believe, by Robert Owen, it is laid down as "fundamental principle," that "man is a compound being, formed of his organisation at birth, and the effects of external circumstances acting upon that organisation from birth to death; such organisation and external circumstances acting and reacting each upon the other." Clearly, therefore, according to this "fundamental principle," the compound being or organisation is the *man*, at every period of its existence. We are properly told above that the organisation, in other words, the *man*, and circumstances, continually act and react each upon the other. How then can it be asserted by the holders of such doctrine, that the *man* does not play a part, aye, and an important part too, in the formation of his own character? How, in the name of wonder, can any creature that necessarily and unceasingly plays a part in the work of its own modification, have its character formed for and *not* by it? How monstrously absurd is such doctrine from the mouths of those very people who assure us, that if circumstances act upon organisation, organisation reacts upon circumstances; in other words, if man is modified *by*, he is also the modifier of circumstances?

Man, in every stage of his existence, is a result; and a reacting, no less than acting, force, aiding in the work of his own improvement or deterioration. Obtuse indeed must be the intellectual faculties of that reader who does not at once perceive, that if man is a complex being, formed of his organisation at birth and the effects of external circumstances acting upon that organisation from birth to death, the *him*, or organisation, must be unceasingly a helper in the work of producing *character*, no less than all those *other* effects of which *man*, conjointly with the material world, is the cause. It has often been objected in my hearing, by persons quite willing to become socialists, that if, as the sentence under review implies, man takes no part in the formation of his own character, it is false to say he is the *creator* as well as the *creature* of circumstances. The objection is a valid one. If man is the *creator* of circumstances, which every socialist admits, is it not clear as an Italian sky, that by the very act of creating them, he does, according to the nature and extent of such creation, by so much form his own character, together with the character of all others within the sphere of his influence.

To do more than simply point out a blunder so palpable to readers of THE INVESTIGATOR is, I hope, quite unnecessary—but should the unlucky sentence here dealt with find defenders among philosophical socialists, I will return to the charge, and not only attempt to cast more light upon this ridiculous fallacy about the character of man being formed for and *not* by him, but also enter upon the unpleasant task of proving that there is not a single outline, statement, or book, now authorised by the socialist society in which there is not much the best friends of socialism would wish to see expunged—sentences in every respect well fitted to keep the one above examined company.

In justice to myself it should be mentioned, that at the congress of 1840, held in Manchester, I undertook, if the congress would appoint a revisional committee, to prove before such committee that *all* the authorised works of the then styled "Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists" abounded in philosophical, no less than verbal, inaccuracies—but I was given to understand that old society was falling to pieces so rapidly, that one solar year was the longest lease of life our old immoral world could reckon on—I was so very complacently told, that before the expiration of that period it must vanish into the "infinite obscure," and

Like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind!

that my mouth was shut, it being quite obvious, if the new moral world was so close at hand, and the old immoral world in such a racing consumption, any labour expended in setting the society's books in order would have been so much pure loss. My proposition to the congress therefore fell to the ground.

Since that congress I have re-studied all the great questions connected with or growing out of socialism, and I hereby



publish as the result of those investigations my solemn conviction, that, save and except only "Essays on the Formation of Character," there is not a single book of Mr. Owen's, or a single book authorised by the Rational Society, that will, as a whole, bear the severe test of philosophical analysis, or the brunt of public debate. But it is evident that errors of language do not necessarily imply errors of principle—nor can truth be shaken, though it may be obscured and distorted, by injudicious advocacy. The principles of socialism, as well as economic as moral, I deem perfectly defensible. Its morality is based upon the fact that man is, in every sense, a production of nature, no less than shrubs or hailstones—that, like all other actual existences, he is material, and the mental phenomena he exhibits are results, necessary results, of matter's action—that the man is the body and the body the man—that what are popularly called "sensibilities, intellectual powers, animal propensities, moral feelings," &c., are nothing more than the various and ever-varying effects or phenomena caused by the human structure acted upon, and acting upon, the parts of nature with which it is immediately in contact. Man is just as much the creature of an invincible necessity as any other animal—nor is it possible to discover the slightest essential difference between human and brute nature. Man may be improved or deteriorated to an extent of which the limits (if there be any) can never be known. The cat, the rat, the hawk, the sparrow, and other creatures naturally antipathetic towards each other, have been trained to live together in harmony and contentment. If the cat can, as we know it can, easily be taught to socialise with the rat, and even the lion be trained to sport harmlessly with the lamb, surely it is not too much to expect there will come a time when men and women shall be educated "to offices of tender courtesy," of gentleness, peace, and love.

Man has been, beyond all question, the most depraved, inconsistent, foolish, prone, sneaking, and cruel of all animals—but the very necessities of his nature will goad him into better courses than he has hitherto pursued. He will become virtuous in self-defence, when he shall understand his own nature, which is a common receptacle or reservoir, whence issue qualities the most discordant—a flood composed of many waters, some bitter, some sweet, some like medicinal gums from Arabian trees, and some most foully poisonous. Those who say man is good by nature, talk no less idly than those who declare he is bad by nature—the truth lying just between these two extreme opinions. Man's moral being, like his physical being is compounded. It is not simply good, or entirely bad, but a compound of both. None are all evil, and most assuredly none are all good—nor are we warranted by philosophy in presuming any human being ever will become either the one or the other.

The inscription on the monument of a Newfoundland dog, written by Lord Byron, contains the following lines:

Oh man! thou feeble tenant of a hour,  
Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,  
Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,  
Degraded mass of animated dust!  
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,  
Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!  
By nature vile, ennobled but by name,  
Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.

Such sentiments much better become disgusted misanthropists, than enlightened philosophers. It is an error to suppose man "by nature vile;" as by nature we are indifferent, the course of our inclination being determined by the particular and general character of influences surrounding us. If influenced well we act well, when our nature is pronounced good; if influenced ill we act ill, when our nature is called bad. I write, be it understood, of influence in the aggregate. Yes, it is the aggregate of influences acting from the earliest to the latest periods, upon individual natures that determines their peculiarities, making them vile or noble, wretched or happy, wise or foolish. Away, then, with the spurious notion that man has a *fixed* nature. Away with the fallacious supposition that he has either vices or virtues, save those grafted in him by "an early custom."

If the fundamental principle of socialism be true, man moves in his petty orbit just as necessarily as the planets wheel about in theirs—he no more determines his own time, mode, or character of being, than do wolves and foxes determine theirs—he can no more radically change his feelings than his form, or choose his appetites and convictions, than

the place of his birth. If the theory of socialism be worth anything, man is bound by the everlasting cords of necessity, in other words, he is physically, and of course morally, an effect of that unceasing material action of which the universe is the theatre.

I was unborn,  
I sought not to be born—nor love the state  
To which that birth has brought me.

Such are the words put by Lord Byron into the mouth of Cain—words pregnant with deep meaning. For all were as Cain is fabled by the poet to have been. All were *unborn*—all know there was a time when they were not, or rather when they had no sense of existence—all know they sought not to be born. When we were born, how we were born, where we were born, depended in no wise upon us. Nor did it in anywise depend upon any *will* of ours whether we should be soundly or unsoundly organised—be brought forth in a hovel or a palace—amid the very best or very worst circumstances—and yet, is it not evident that our whole character at this moment is the joint result of original structure and ever fluctuating circumstances? Man is, it can scarce be too oft repeated, an effect, and like all other effects, the mere consequent of inevitable antecedents.

These truths have been allowed by philosophers from the times of Aristotle; but Robert Owen is, perhaps, the only man who has fully appreciated, or attempted to establish, a state of society whose principle and practice would directly proceed from and harmonise with those truths. The "Republic" of "Plato," the "Utopia" of More, the "Oceana" of Harrington, and other ideal *paper* states of society, demonstrate that the fundamental dogma of socialism has been recognised by the learned of by-gone ages—but it was reserved for Robert Owen to propose a scheme of society based on the philosophy of influence, which, so soon as people in general are prepared to understand the immense advantages likely to accrue from its establishment, will put Elysium to shame, and realise, *in fact*, more than the delights fabled even of Mohammed's paradise!

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TWOPENCE.

TO HIS GRACE

## THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

### LETTER V.

NOW your grace cannot be suspected of atheism. I, at all events, do not suspect the purity of your theism. I do not credit, or rather discredit, you with acting so disgraceful a part as did those priests of Greece and Rome, who "concealed the heart of an atheist under their sacerdotal robes." No, I firmly believe that you are a theist of the trinitarian school. Whether you agree with Secker, that God is not three persons, but "*three substances*"—with Le Clerc, that he is "*three distinct cogitations*"—with Burnet, that he is only "*three diversities*"—or with Tillotson, that the genuine trinity is not three distinct persons, but merely "*three differences*"—or in a regularly orthodox trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, "*three persons in one God*," I pretend not to determine. All I feel assured of with respect to your grace's creed is, that it has trinitarianism-theism for its groundwork. To charge your grace with atheism would be grossly unjust, and certainly any attempt to make it appear that you are unitarian, would be scarce less so. The church of England, equally with the church of Rome, is trinitarian, and as little do I expect his holiness, the pope, to favour the one-in-three-persons heresy as your grace—nay, I much fear that your hatred of both unitarianism and atheism has hindered your grace from examining the doctrines on which they rest with that unprejudiced and truth-loving eye without whose aid the boldest, as well as most skilful investigators must fail to acquire correct knowledge. It is because I think the whole course of your grace's education has tended to place you in a *false position* with regard to your fellow-creatures, and bribed you into fierce advocacy of some doctrines, and opposition the most bitter to others, that I now propose to force upon your grace's attention some *facts* relating to the leading dogma of many-visaged christianity, that I do not suppose have hitherto fallen under your notice.

In a former letter I have simply mentioned "The Existence of Christ Disproved," a work which, as your grace might infer from its title, has caused much uneasiness to all sound christians. To critically examine, or even to offer any opinion of that most singular work, is foreign to my present purpose, which is merely to call your grace's attention to some passages in pages 122-124—they are as follow :

The dogma of the unity of God, the first theological dogma of the christians, is not peculiar to their religion. It has been admitted by almost all the ancient philosophers—and even the Pagans, whose worship was polytheistical in appearance, always acknowledged one grand chief to whom all others were submitted, under various names, whether gods or angels, as the christian angels and saints are to the supreme God. Such was the great Jupiter with the Greeks and with the Romans—that Jupiter called the father of the gods and men, who was said to fill the universe with his substance. He was the sovereign monarch of nature, and though the name of gods was given to the other divinities, it was an association in

the title rather than in the power; each divinity having his particular department under the control or empire of the first God, sovereign, and absolute master of all others. The scripture itself gives the name of gods to beings subordinate to the first God, without injury to the unity of the chief, or first cause. It was precisely so with the Jupiter of the Greeks, they repeated, without ceasing, the epithet of *one or unique* that they gave to Jupiter; Jupiter, said they, is one. The oracle of Apollo admitted also an uncreated God, born of himself, whose dwelling place was the bosom of the fire ether; a God placed at the head of all the hierarchy.....

The correspondence of all the parts of the world between themselves, and their tendency towards a common centre of movement and of life, has caused men who regarded the great whole as an immense God, to admit his unity, not being able to conceive anything beyond the assemblage of all beings, or beyond the whole. It was the same with those who regarded the universe as a great effect. The union of all parts of the world and the regular *ensemble* of all systems of the world, led them also to admit one only cause of one only effect; so that the unity of God was acknowledged as a principle in the minds of those who placed God, or the first cause, beyond the world, and in the minds of those who confounded God with the world, and did not distinguish between the workman and the work—as Pliny, and all the most ancient philosophers, who held that all things are connected together by a sacred chain; nor can there be one thing strange to another, for all that is, they held to be combined to form a definite whole, upon which depends the beauty of the universe. There is, say they, but one only world, which includes all; one only God, who is everywhere; one only matter, which is eternal; one only law, which is reason, common to all things. It is easy to deduce as a consequence, from the above dogma, the unity of God, that is to say, the philosophical opinion and the motive which gave birth to it. The fathers of the church themselves have inferred the unity of God from the unity of the world, that is to say, the unity of the cause from the unity of the effect; for with them the effect is distinguished from the cause, or God is separated from the universe; by which, we mean, they admitted an abstract cause instead of a real being, which is the universe.

Your grace will gather from these passages, that the work from whence they are extracted is a rather heterodox one. But that is a most excellent reason why your grace, and all other investigators, should attentively study its contents, since searchers after truth profit most largely by the calm analysis of opinions antagonistic to their own, and therefore do I strongly recommend your grace, if you have not already provided yourself with a copy, to immediately obtain one, as the work abounds in matter no less instructive than this that I have quoted.

Many christians, and even deists, as your grace cannot but know, are not aware that the ancients regarded the great whole as an immense God—that there is one only world, which is all—that there is one only God, who is everything and everywhere; in other words, that matter is all that has, does, or can exist; and that even the fathers of the christian church have *inferred* the unity of their God from the unity of the world—another proof, your grace, if proof were wanting, that all ideas of an unnatural Being or Beings are derived from natural sources.

But my chief object in directing your grace's attention to this question of God's unity is that by so doing I may expose the hollowness, the utter rottenness, of the now all but universally received opinion that the universe is a known effect. We have seen that the fathers of the church inferred the unity of a Being they called God from the unity of the world. Our unique world, they concluded, must be an effect. Now if the world is an effect, it of course had a cause. But I



tell your grace that those fathers had no business to take it for granted the universe is an effect. They should have *proved* it to be an effect—proved it by legitimate inferences from authenticated facts. They, however, did not think proper, or rather, I suppose, did not find it convenient, to have strict and honourable dealings with facts. No, your grace, fancies and fictions suited them infinitely better—they were more plastic, cheap, and accommodating. They wanted men to believe the universe was caused. A *caused* universe must have had a *causer*, and as all effects include the idea of *adequate* causes, those who allow the universe to be an effect cannot escape from the conclusion that the God they say caused it, must be a Being, and of course must be adequate to the production of so utterly inconceivable an effect. The causer of the universe, *if* it ever had one, is necessarily "separated from the universe, all causes not only being different, but essentially distinct from their effects;" and it is therefore the early fathers were constrained to admit "an abstract cause instead of a real Being for their God." Nor can your grace, I am persuaded, place your hand upon your heart, and declare that you have, I will not say a *clear* idea, but *any* idea at all, of a real Being who *caused* the universe. You may cheat yourself and others into the belief that you believe in such a being, but, to be candid with your grace, it appears to me mere self-cheatery and delusion.

It commonly happens with theologians, that they begin their ministrations by gulling others, and presently gull themselves. Error is very like pitch, defiling all who are either tempted or forced into contact with it. Now, your grace is in such a position, that to avoid defiling yourself and others is impossible. Like Sir John Falstaff, you are but "labouring in your vocation." The archbishopric of Canterbury would contaminate a saint, therefore I beg your grace to understand, that it is not with yourself personally or individually that I war, but with the vile *principle* and practice of which you are the incarnated essence. Nay, I go farther, and avow in full sincerity, that there is no priest in existence for whose character, as a priest, I have more profound respect than for your grace's, save and except only the pope's, he being, in my judgment, the most complete, consistent, and intelligible priest in Europe, if not the entire world. But I abhor all personalities, so gladly come back to the point, namely, whether your grace can have an idea of the something so confidently said to be a nothing, distinct from the universe, and capable of producing it. I have a thousand times tried to conceive or think of such a universal causer, but my intellect always sunk beneath the effort. Perhaps, however, from some peculiar malformation of brain, or, it may be, from its morbid activity, I am unable to conceive of much that your grace finds no difficulty in contemplating; if so, I hope the world will soon see a flood of light thrown upon this dark question.

Robert Owen, who fills quite as large, though not the same space in the public eye, as your grace, agrees with all sound christians in their doctrine of a *caused* universe. I have heard him say, a score of times, that "there must have been a cause for all existences, by the fact of their existence." Now the absolute "must," notwithstanding, I incline to the opinion, that of *necessity* there is and ever has been at least *one* uncaused cause, the only disputable question being, whether the *universe* is that uncaused cause, or *something* before it. The atheist thinks the universe is the uncaused cause of all effects we behold—of all effects which struck upon the sense of our first fathers—of all the effects which the never-ceasing operation of its visible parts will necessarily produce. Robert Owen is a great and good man. He boasts, and perhaps justly, of being a man of facts, and altogether practical—but I should like to know how he knows, and so would your grace, no doubt, that because one thing exists, another thing must have existed before it—or by what fact he is prepared to shoulder up his dogma, that "there must have been a cause for all existences, by the fact of their existence." I confess myself totally unable to understand by what line of argument he, or your grace, or any other theist, can infer from the effects of which matter is the obvious cause, that matter itself is an effect of something immaterial. Nor can I understand what is to be gained, save to the friends of error, by setting forward as fact, or even credible hypothesis, such wild conceits as this one I have here so unequivocally condemned.

Your grace has probably heard of Hardouin, a member of the famous Society of Jesus. Now, in the "Rational Library,"

vol. i p. 84, I find a passage from his writings to this purpose: "IF BY FAITH WE BELIEVE IN A TRUE GOD, A SINGULAR SUBSTANCE, NOTHING SHOULD APPEAR INCREDIBLE. THIS CHIEF OF MYSTERIES BEING ONCE ADMITTED, REASON OUGHT NOT TO BE SHOCKED AT ANY OTHER. AS FOR ME, I ADMIT A MILLION OF THINGS, WHICH I UNDERSTAND NOT, AS READILY AS I BELIEVE ONE TRUTH THAT IS ABOVE MY CAPACITY."

Now this remarkable passage, printed in small capitals, that your grace's attention may be specially directed to it, is full of deep meaning, it is an open avowal, by an undoubted christian, that to believe in a God is to believe so little in harmony with pure reason, that he who can believe in such supposed being, whose faith is so strong as to enable him to think divine truth a proposition above his capacity, is in a condition to believe anything, however incredible. Blest condition for those happy persons, who are quite sure that a man's chances of intensely eternal and eternally intense delights in another world, are to be measured by the extent of his credulity in this! (Gibbon, shortly before his death, spoke very contemptuously about "the faith of enthusiasts, who sing hallelujahs above the clouds.") But your grace, I question not, is convinced that faith is the one thing wanting, the true elixir vite, the only kind of moral cordial competent to keep in everlasting contact the bodies and souls of men, the preservative against that contaminating thing called reason, which is now so industriously employed in digging religion's grave. Yes, your grace, it is faith enables men to believe in a true God—to the believer in whom we are told "nothing should appear incredible." It is faith in that "chief of mysteries," which, the same authority assures us, "being once admitted, reason ought not to be shocked at any other," has through all recorded time, enabled the cunning few to mould and shape at their will the owl-like many. The cunning few are even now before your grace's eyes, and seemingly with your grace's sanction, playing the same odious game so often played before. But the popular intellect is fast coursing to maturity. By and by it will be quite ripe, of that fact your grace may rest secure—the question agitated among reflecting men, not being whether intellect in the aggregate is ripening, but whether, if not well husbanded and sagely directed, it may not, ere long, to use a phrase of Burke's, "ripen into rottenness." I frankly warn your grace that a great crisis in human affairs has arrived—that the priests of all religions must speedily "set their houses in order," or prepare to see them crumble to dust before their eyes—that the truth-tellers are not now to be *killed off*—or a mortal struggle between the principles of faith and the principles of reason any longer to be *put off*. It is altogether incredible, except to those who having admitted the chief of mysteries, deem nothing so—that a swarm of lazy fellows called priests should be much longer allowed to play their detestable pranks in Europe, to check the free use of reason, to dominion over conscience, to dam up some sources of necessary information, and throw insuperable obstacles in paths leading to others. I warn your grace that the people of England, great as is their faith in the incredible, will not much longer consent to pay the established clergy, of whom you are commander-in-chief, some twenty millions sterling per annum, "for teaching the incomprehensible." I warn your grace that, humanly speaking, the only way to preserve the christian religion, is by showing, that the fundamental dogma on which it rests is not incredible, but perfectly credible. Surely a religion that has for its fundamental dogma "the chief of mysteries," must be itself exceedingly mysterious. But can your grace tell me how doctrines and precepts confessedly mysterious, can be ranked among truths? Religious truths, if there are such, one might reasonably have expected, would be the most palpable and least mysterious of all truths, inasmuch as, if theologians do not greatly err, our eternal welfare is contingent upon a willing reception of such truths. To me it seems extraordinary that any men should be found foolish enough in this age of comparative light and science, to expect their fellow-creatures to receive as clearly, nay divinely, true, propositions which are either incomprehensible or incredible. Dr. Buckland has more than once declared, that "to look into the mysteries of nature, and there to apply those high powers of reason with which the creator has endowed man, is a privilege belonging exclusively to the human race." Now I put it to your grace, as a man of

\* That amusing paradox is the property of Mr. Fleming, editor of "The New Moral World."

reason, whether mysteries do not cease to be mysteries the very instant they fall within the range and scope of reason? It is precisely because no reason can be advanced with respect to universal existence, that the universe is called a mystery. But is it reasonable to suppose, that if an omnipotent God, such as your grace professes to adore, had published a revelation of himself; such revelation should have been disputed—should, in point of fact, not merely have failed to convince many who had it before them, but positively have been utterly unknown to, and of course unbelieving in by, countless millions of human creatures. If the creator *has* ennobled man with such high powers of reason, as man is so convinced he has, how happens it that the very existence of that creator has been called in question by some of the most able of human reasoners? How happens it, that the christian religion, a religion which its priests assure us is the only true one, the only one God wishes us to receive—how happens it, I ask, that such a religion is rejected as mere fable by immense numbers of the most thoughtful and enlightened people of Europe? Can it be that reason is a curse, a hindrance to the just appreciation of religious truth? Can it be that reason degrades, instead of ennobles, human intellect? and that men can far better see divine truth through the dense fogs of which their own errors and love of vulgar mysticism are the twin parent, than through the clear atmosphere generated by knowledge in union with a love of nature? No, your grace, these things cannot be. But if they cannot be, how does your grace reconcile with the asserted rationality of christianity, the unquestioned fact, that the soundest believers in christian doctrine are the unsoundest thinkers upon all other topics? How do you reconcile another fact, equally unquestioned, with your very much questioned fact, that there is a God—namely, that a disbelief in the existence of one or more gods, in a word, *atheism*, has always flourished most among the politest individuals of the most polite nations?

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

### POLITICAL RIGHTS.

We need the publication of moral and political works connected with our everyday life, with a *scientific basis* and no other, such as would establish, for instance, our wants on the facts of our organisation, our duties as social beings on the natural feelings resulting from those wants, and our *political rights* as freedom, on the natural consequence of having acquired the knowledge of our wants, and that of our moral duties, through natural experience and knowledge.—A STUDENT IN REALITIES.

The word rights, in a political sense, means, I presume, one of two things—it means privileges, whether negative or positive, actually enjoyed by the individuals of a given country, in relation to the government of such country—or it means those positive or negative privileges, in other words, those powers of doing or not doing, in respect to a nation's affairs, that politicians, individually and in the aggregate, think ought to be placed within the reach either of their individual selves, of some fractional portion of society, or it may be of the whole community.

Both these meanings are plain enough, if considered separately, but jumbled together, as they commonly are by politicians, it is difficult to get a clear idea of either. In truth, the word rights is used in partisan newspapers, and at popular meetings, in so vague, general, undeterminable a manner, that it may be safely averred not one of a score who attend the one, or read the other, have a thoroughly clear conception of its meaning.

Now right, etymologically considered, signifies simply what is *ordered, ruled, or appointed*—and, of course, political rights thus considered, are neither more nor less than the privileges, positive and negative, *ordered, ruled, or appointed* by the government of any state, in favour of one individual, all individuals, or only a section of individuals.

Rights are guaranteed by law or custom, as for example, to have a voice in the election of those who make our laws, is a most important right, guaranteed by law to a section of the whole population of these realms, while the right to do many things daily done by the people individually and collectively, has no root save in the soil of custom, no law in its favour save the potent law of usage.

With respect to the rights here treated of, which are,

indeed, as we shall presently see, the only practical rights, all others being merely nominal, it matters not to the privileged party or parties, whether such rights be guaranteed by statute law, by common law, or by the law of usage. It is often found that this law of common usage no less effectually perpetuates class and sectional privileges, even when such privileges are quite incompatible with the interests of all save those who enjoy them, than they could be by any other law whatever, common or statute.

The rights about which we hear so much at public meetings, and elsewhere, are, in reality, no rights at all, for political rights in the only practical sense of those terms, include the idea of powers possessed by some one or more persons to take part, or if they so desire, to abstain from taking part, in the administration of state affairs. A right or privilege without the power to exercise it amounts just to no right, to no privilege at all. All but imaginary political rights, are rights their possessors are free to exercise—and not by any means those privileges he wishes to exercise, or thinks ought to be exercised.

I am told by politicians of the radical school, that every human being has a natural, an inherent right to this, that, and the other, in virtue of his or her existence. I am assured that all have equal rights by nature, rights which no honest government can disturb or take away—but, for my own part, I cannot understand how or where such rights exist—and if I could make that out, my judgment would be still at fault as to the utility of them. To talk about abstract, natural, indefeasible, or inherent rights, is, according to my political philosophy, altogether ridiculous—for the idea of actual rights, political or otherwise, cannot be separated even in thought, from the idea of actual powers. Abstract conceptions of what ought to be, are only of value inasmuch as they point the way, and furnish the means of useful action. It is often declared from rostrums, that every man of full age, in these dominions, unspotted by crime, has a natural and inherent right to the suffrage—when, in point of fact, all those individuals, in this or any other country, who are forbidden by the laws the exercise of so inestimable a privilege, have no more actual right to it, natural or unnatural, inherent or outherent, than I have at this instant to go a ballooning to the planet Venus. I am prohibited by the nature of things, my anxiously wished for trip to Venus—I am no less effectually prohibited by the nature of England's institutions, from exercising the ardently desired right to vote for those who determine the character of those institutions. That it is right all men, and women too, of ripe age, unstained by serious crimes should enjoy such right, I am ever ready to maintain—but that such right is not natural, but, like all other rights, *purely incidental*, is to me clear as the clearest proposition in Euclid.

Abstractions are nothing, and abstract rights are just no rights at all. They are the rights of opinion, not of fact, and nowhere to be found except in the brains of politicians. One man assures other men that they have an unquestionable right to as much land or goods as will suffice to preserve them from actual starvation. Well, lured by this righteous phantasm, the said men, we will suppose, seize upon some land or goods, in virtue of their natural, inherent, indefeasible right to do so—when lo! a troop of her majesty's constables pounce upon them, drag them to the first convenient gaol, and hang them on the first convenient day—the poor fellows having no other satisfaction in their dying agonies, than the assurance of their crack-brained deluder, that no government could prohibit the exercise of such right, or take it away.

The inconsistency, too, of many sticklers for natural, inherent, and indefeasible rights, is hardly less amusing than mischievous. As consistent politicians, championing the natural right of all men to the suffrage, they should also champion the natural right of all women to the suffrage—it being quite evident that such rights, did they exist, are common to women as well as to men, but alas, how few among the bawlers for the natural, the inherent, the indefeasible rights of man, say so much as half a syllable about the rights of woman. No, upon that question they are "dumb dogs," probably because they are convinced all is or will be freedom "where themselves are free;" besides, the average of them graze at large in that "common of God's people," yelp bible, where they suck up much mental nutrition, in the shape of doctrine favourable to the divine right of man to domineer over woman. But it is very inconsistent in cer-



tain political parties—the chartists for example—to raise such an outcry about what they call the natural and inalienable right of every male to the suffrage, and remain mute as mice about the *equally* natural and inalienable right of every female. But who in his proper mind would look for consistent practice from individual politicians, or political parties too stupid to understand what is true, or too corrupt to cling to it?

I have now lying before me the famous "National Petition," presented to the House of Commons by Mr. Duncombe some time last year, which contains many clauses altogether posterous. One of them is as follows:

That your petitioners maintain, that it is the inherent, indubitable, and constitutional right, founded upon the ancient practice of the realm of England, and supported by well-approved statutes, of every male inhabitant of the United Kingdom, he being of age and of sound mind, not convicted of crime, and not confined under any judicial process, to exercise the elective franchise in the choice of members to serve in the Commons' House of Parliament.

Such is the clause of a petition emanating from the chartist body, which it is said had more than two millions of *bona fide* signatures attached to it. Now this one clause, not to speak of others therein contained, equally foolish, demonstrate the delusive reasonings imposed as sound political truth on the reforming section of society. Here they are, in their own petition, pledged to maintain a right that neither had nor can have existence. If a political right, say a right to the suffrage, were a right inherent to the nature of every man, it would be part and parcel of that nature. To root it out, to transfer it, or even to prevent its exercise, would be impossible. Any right that may by law or custom be wrested from an individual or a party—any transferable right, or any right whose free exercise may be prevented, is not an inherent right at all, it is a right of convention merely, a right originating with society, and of course may be annihilated by society. Then, as to an indubitable and constitutional right, there may be such a right under certain circumstances, but I do not understand how the right of every male inhabitant of the United Kingdom, he being of age, and of sound mind, &c., can be called an indubitable, that is an unquestioned, right, seeing that it is called in question by a very large number of individuals, and those too at present forming the most influential, if not the most numerous, section of society—while to cram the people with stuff about a "constitutional right, founded upon the ancient practice of the law of England," when it is well known that this country never had, and certainly has not now, what is properly a constitution at all, is preposterously fallacious. This fact has been so often pointed out by Publicola, in his able communication to the "Weekly Dispatch," that it really does amaze me to find such abominable trash in a petition of so important a character. Who can wonder that so miserable a production was successfully assailed from all sides of the house. Lord John Russell, in particular, made capital use of the advantage such spurious doctrine offered to himself and party. His words were:

I am aware that it is a doctrine frequently urged, and I perceive dwelt upon in this petition, that every male of a certain age, has a right, absolute and inalienable, to elect a representative to take his place among the members of the Commons' House of Parliament. Now, sir, I never could understand that indefeasible right. It appears to me that that question, like every other in the practical application of politics, is to be settled by the institutions and laws of the country of which the individual is a native. I see no more right that a person twenty-one years of age has to elect a member of parliament than he has to be a jurymen. I conceive that you may just as well say that every adult male has a right to sit upon a jury to decide the most complicated and difficult questions of property, or that every man has a right to exercise the judicial functions, as the people did in some of the republics of antiquity. These things it appears to me, are not matters of right; but if it be good for the people at large, if it be conducive to the right government of the state, if it tend to the freedom and welfare of the people, that a certain number, defined, and limited by reference to a fixed standard of property, should have the right of electing members of parliament, and if it be disadvantageous to the community at large that the right of suffrage should be universal, then I say that on such a subject the consideration of the public good should prevail, that legislation must act upon it as on every other, and that no inalienable right can be quoted against that which the good of the whole demands.

I know how unfortunate it is for any individual who would curry favour with the radically reforming section of British society to agree upon any conceivable point with an obnoxious statesman—nevertheless, I do declare my acceptance of the above doctrine. In my judgment, it is sound political sense, and a masterly correction of fallacies touching "inalienable rights" that will have its due effect upon all thinking politicians. I am neither a whig nor a "finality" politician,

but one who is ever ready to pay truth homage, and embrace it with ardour, from whatever lips it may fall. If the fabled devil were a real personage and taught political truth, I would just as willingly receive it from him as any other gentleman, however sanctified his reputation. What I really grieve about in relation to this petition is, that its framers should have introduced into what ought to have been an important national document, the shallow, the palpable sophistry my Lord Russell so ably, yet so easily, exposed. A national petition should be drawn up in an honest spirit, with so strict a regard to probity, and set forth such reasons for popular enfranchisement, that it would *gain* not *lose* by public debate—reasons against which sophistry the most ingenious might spend itself in vain, and not flimsy twaddle about natural, inherent, inalienable, indefeasible rights. I am as anxious as those who drew up the national petition can be that every man, and every woman too, of ripe age, if unstained by odious crimes, should have the right of suffrage—but I should blush to call for the acknowledgment of such right by the commons of England on the ground of its being an inherent, indubitable, and constitutional right, founded upon the ancient practice of the law of England. Instead of appealing to *ancient practice*, the petitioners ought to have insisted on *modern wants*. Practices are none the better for being ancient, while a practice from the very fact of its being ancient, ought to be judged of suspiciously, as practice originating in comparatively barbarous ages, and therefore not likely to be in harmony with modern civilisation. The right of men to have a voice in making the laws by which they are governed, must be demanded on the ground of such right not only being compatible, but useful, to the state—for if it could be shown by clear arguments, or by reference to actual results, that it is not for the good of the people at large—that it is *not* conducive to the good government of a nation to extend the right of suffrage to all—if such extension of popular rights would *not* tend to the maintenance, freedom, and welfare of the people, then, I say, as did Lord Russell, that "on such a subject, the consideration of the public good should prevail: that legislation must act upon it as on every other, and that no inalienable right can be quoted against that which the good of the whole demands." It is upon the utilitarian principle, and no other, that I call upon the government of this country to strengthen and improve the liberties of the people—upon that principle, and no other, I am an advocate for universal suffrage—mind, reader, universal suffrage, and "no mistake"—suffrage for women as well as for men—for I can see no reason why women should be denied the privilege of aiding in the work of legislation, any more than "the lords of the creation." They, no less than men, are called upon to obey the laws—and though they have no more an inherent, a natural, or any other right to the suffrage, than have ducks or partridges, my opinion decidedly is, that it would be quite right for the legislature to confer it on them—and if the legislature is not disposed to deal out such valuable privilege with so liberal a hand, it will be quite right in the people at large to squeeze it into compliance. In my judgment, the people of this country ought never to cease agitating these topics, and, if necessary, should deal with the commons, as Lord, then Henry Brougham recommended them to deal with the lords, namely, if they will not move on, they, the people, should push them on—and if they, the commons, wear spurs upon their heels, they, the people, should buckle spurs upon their toes.

Such is my advice to the reformers. It is quite time that they should go wisely, honestly, and earnestly to work. They should remember the truth so well stated by Hobbs, that "to say all human beings have a right to everything, is just equal to declaring that no one has a right to anything." They should cease to waste time and energies in discussing *what has been*, but turn their chief, say sole attention, to *what ought to be*—and, above all, they should be careful so to reason and so to act, as not to furnish the common enemies of human advancement with a pretext for perpetuating slavery. With a view to aid in disabusing reformers of a most ridiculous error, I have penned the foregoing remarks. They are intended as the first of many heavy blows it is necessary some one should deal upon the head of a monster fallacy, that has done more to impede the progress of republican principles, than, perhaps, any other single cause. Subjoined is an article on the same subject, that I met with some months since, in a now defunct paper called the "Inquirer," which is really excellent, and should be carefully

studied by our flaming democrats, who declaim so vehemently about rights :

We are probably all of us in the habit of frequently talking of our *rights*, and yet very few of us may at all have considered what we mean by the word. We suppose that there is no difficulty about it, and this satisfies us. Some talk of the natural right of every man to a vote in the election of members of parliament. We hear much from others of the rights of industry, which we mean, believe, that the labouring classes are *entitled* (but the foundation of the title we know not—we suppose it means that the thing is reasonable and good) to a certain proportion of the produce of industry, or to the enjoyment, in return for their labour, of a certain degree of comfort. There are also those who talk of the natural right of the landowner to the land upon which they have happened to be born; and there are many other alleged rights which it would be needless and tedious to enumerate. We may perhaps judge from those mentioned what is the meaning of the term. When it is asserted that every man has a right to the elective franchise, what is it precisely that it is intended to maintain? Is it that it belongs to him by the ancient laws and institutions of the country? But then, supposing this capable of historical proof, no one will be so absurd as to maintain that ancient laws have any inherent or prescriptive authority; it remains to be proved that they are just by which the right in question is derived from the laws of constitution, and that it is not desirable in themselves; and after all, no ground would be established for men's exercising the pretended right; it would only be shown by one kind of argument, that it would be a good or right thing that the legislature should confer the right of universal suffrage. When so conferred, it would be a right in an intelligible sense. The right to vote would then be like the right to lands and houses, a something established by law, and which the governing powers of the country guarantee to all its inhabitants. But you tell me that you mean more than this; there may be bad laws, but right still exists, and a good man may be a bad legislator, and his laws may be a source of serious wrong and ruin to the friends of freedom. Then it must be supposed, that, by rights, you mean principles or institutions which (that is in your opinion) are right and good; but you cannot pretend to infallibility, or claim to impose your judgment upon others. No doubt, among political institutions, some are better than others. There is but one end and purpose which can be admitted, the production of the greatest amount of general happiness. Some institutions very obviously, as we think, are opposed to this purpose; others promote it very rudely and imperfectly. What would *really* be the best plan for accomplishing the object is *right*, and ought to be established; and if we have any doubt on this point, we think the way the true way, and only continued discussion, leading to general agreement, can settle the question. The right, when perceived and admitted by large numbers, can only prevail either by means allowable according to existing institutions, in which case it regularly becomes, as the result of discussion, a legal and constitutional right; or by a forcible substitution for a system which is opposed to it, in which case success makes the difference between treason and exalted patriotism. This latter method may be necessary in some extreme cases; but one actuated by virtuous and benevolent motives, not by any one possessed of a tolerable share of prudence, would be so useful in any case, that it is not surprising that the view the establishment has really secured the approbation of a great, and the most important, portion of society, so that the change might be made *forcibly* indeed, but without prolonging contest and bloodshed.

It seems, then, that, as that is really best—the abstract right—cannot be infallibly known, to make a right in this sense is a *matter of opinion*. Every one may promote his own views by proper means; but to speak of what we think best as a *right* which must be enforced, and resistance of which is tyranny and crime, is extreme presumption and absurdity.

But surely it will be thought, when we speak of the *rights of man*, we mean something more than what we who proclaim them think good.

Those who use such expressions *imagine* that they mean something more. They mean to assert a natural claim, which all must be sensible of, to certain advantages—a claim which may properly be enforced at any time, when it is possible, and by any available means, and which it is to be accounted *tyranny* to resist; but what they *affirm* is as conscientiously denied by others. Opinions have hitherto varied as to the social institutions most favourable to human happiness; and if some believe in natural rights belonging to the people, others have believed quite as sincerely against natural rights belonging to the sovereign—opposition to which is a crime against the community. If we are to be guided, on the whole, by reason, we must defend measures by *proving* them to be *good*;—not satisfy ourselves by demanding them as *rights*. We must not imagine the use of that word to give any mysterious importance to what we propose,

Etymologically, *rights* signifies *what is ruled or appointed*—that is, of course, by a sufficient authority—and we use the word in this sense when we talk of rights which depend on the institutions and laws of our country, and are guaranteed to us by the social system under which we live.

This is an intellible sense of the word; but, according to it, plans which we think good, but which are not established by law, imply no rights. Another intellible sense of the word is *what is really good*, and would be established if men were generally wise and good: this is abstract right; but it is something to be sought out, and argued upon—made the subject of reflection and discussion—not to be affirmed as known and certain. The first foundation claims to be a *positive* one, by means of which we can determine what is right, in this sense, and what is not, as each seems possible. Our conviction, however, in this sense leads us to exert ourselves in obtaining public action, producing arguments, appealing to right feelings, and endeavouring to create an active party by whose means the apprehended right may speedily be admitted by legislators, and received among the benefits which the law ensures to us; but in the mean time, though we may recommend it, we cannot insist upon it; and, if, after all, it is not adopted, it is of no avail. The second foundation, on the other hand, in proclaiming it as a right, we assume that every one, whether he approves it or not, is bound to acknowledge it; we fall into a yet more serious error.

The truth seems to be, that very great men have occasionally talked and written much nonsense about rights; and the sooner we can free ourselves from such delusions, the better. All that is secured to us by the social institutions under which we live we have a right to, and nothing more.

For the rest, what is truly good and wise ought in reason to be thus established, and the sooner it is so the better; but it can become so only by certain constitutional means: what we think good we may recommend and promote; but, until the conviction of numbers, actively exerting itself, has produced its effect, there is naught giving us any claim, or authorizing any public course of action. If we consider what is established as morally wrong or naturally unjust, we may feel bound to resist it, suffering the consequences that may thereby arise. We set on our convictions of moral right and real good; but we do not insist on rights; we know that, in such a case, we do not serve our cause by talking of rights.

In the instances to which, by way of illustration, we referred at the commencement of these observations, opinions differ as to what is good, equitable, and desirable; and the alleged rights only mean the *belief* of those who assert them, that such and such things are good and reasonable. Let them, then, defend their views, and show their grounds for their belief; but, in calling what they contend for rights, let them be well aware that they only express their own persuasion that such things are right. They only put forward their *opinion* which must make its way by its reasonableness and usefulness; they must not deceive themselves, or expect to impose upon others, by the magic of the word *rights*.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DISSENTERS.

THE government bill now before parliament for regulating the education of children in factory districts is creating quite a sensation among the dissenters. Their doings are quite characteristic, and remind me of the anecdote told of a certain Roman, who, when asked how it was he could not live happily with his wife, pointed to his shoe, and said, "You see this shoe; it is a nice shoe, a neat shoe, a very pretty shoe, but no one but myself knows where it pinches." I say the doings of the dissenters remind me of this anecdote, for the Tories are just trying the shoe of persecution on the foot of dissent—and, judging from their doleful cries, the dissenters begin to understand where it pinches. Even the Methodists, that the Tory "Standard" "won't wrong so much" as to class them with dissenters—the Methodists, who have the reputation of being rather "milk and water," are moved to cry out lustily against the new bill as an invasion of the sacred rights of conscience, and a monstrous interference with what no government ought to interfere.

At a meeting held on the 13th of April, 1843, at the Tabernacle-square, City-road, one speaker, a Mr. Challis, said the bill was in effect a violation of the rights of conscience. Our ancestors, continued he, had struggled to maintain those rights, and this bill was the first attempt that had been made of late years to encroach upon them; but he trusted the meeting would resist such encroachment by all available means. He was followed by other reverend speakers, who spoke most furiously against the bill—denouncing its authors in terms of bitterest invective, and hurling defiance in their teeth. Meetings of a similar stamp have been held over the whole country, at all of which language has been used that will assuredly frighten the ministers from their propriety, if their bringing forward such a bill at such a time can allow us to credit them with any.

"Oh, how it joys me when the white man suffers!" is the language put by Monk Lewis into the mouth of an African slave. Now, though I do not rejoice in the miseries of my fellow-creatures, I do rejoice most heartily that the ministers have taken this step. I am delighted to see them in battle-array against the dissenters, as, in my judgment, if the latter are soundly thrashed, the people of these realms will be immensely benefitted. The dissenters of this country are only to be beaten into the performance of their duty. It is only by cuffs and blows, in other words, by a little state persecution, that they can be taught what rights of conscience mean. It is only by being made to wear the shoe that they can be taught to sympathise with those who have always worn it. The dissenters of this country are a disgrace to the cause of dissent—they are traitors to its fundamental principle—they have seen that principle outraged in my person, and in the persons of my friends—they stood by and applauded every attempt made by a bloated church hierarchy to put down freedom of debate and "the rights of conscience"—how then can they dare complain if compelled to drink the very dregs of that bitter cup they have so often forced others to partake from?

There can hardly be a question as to the object of the ministry in providing such an education as they propose to provide for the children in our factory districts—that object clearly is to tie up the hands of dissent, and strengthen those



of the church. The church, as by law established, is in a tottering condition. The destruction of that church would involve, at no distant period, the destruction of an aristocracy—and he is a barren politician who needs to be instructed that the monarchical system of this country can only be bolstered up by a powerful aristocracy. No aristocracy, no monarchy, is the rallying cry of conservative politicians. Sir Robert Peel's government is professedly conservative—and the dissenters may rely upon it, so far true to its profession as to originate all practicable measures likely to check dissent, and obstruct all others of a different tendency. The Tories hate dissent—they abhor its principle, because they dread the fruits that principle will, ere long, inevitably produce. The principle of dissent is at once the cause and shield of intellectual freedom. I war not against that principle, but against the lily-livered poltroons who, with an inconsistency only to be matched by its infamy, calmly, nay joyfully, suffer that principle to be outraged, and its asserters consigned to dungeons by bigotted authority. When the late Mr. Richard Carlile was prosecuted by a succession of intolerant ministries, his house legally plundered, and himself consigned to a prison for more than nine years, because he had stood forth the champion of free discussion, and resister of all inroads upon the rights of conscience—did any one of the numerous bodies of dissenters wag a finger in his defence? Did they nobly lay aside all personal differences or animosities in order to vindicate a great principle? No, they did not—but, with a baseness equal to their ignorance, cheered on the enemies of dissent in their cruel outrage upon conscience! And yet these fellows have the audacity to prate by the hour about “resisting all encroachments upon the rights of conscience.” Rights of conscience, forsooth! what care they for any consciences, or any rights, save their own? They have just discovered too, it seems, that the government scheme of non-dissenting education for factory children, is “the first attempt that has been made of late years to encroach upon the rights of conscience.” A most amazing discovery, surely!—or at least a dozen more's nests! Why one is tempted to imagine that Mr. Challis and the army of dissenting priests, who, upon all possible occasions, echo and re-echo that sentiment, have conveniently short memories, or, what is less probable, have for the last twenty years been taking a nap upon the top of some lofty mountain, as did Mr. Rip Van Winkle, according to the well known American tale. If they have not been dozing these twenty years past, how happens it that, though there have been at least as many shameful outrages upon individual conscience during that period, they are quite innocent of the fact? Why ten months have scarce passed away since Mr. Holyoake was tried at Cheltenham, by a jury composed of dissenters and churchmen, found guilty of course, and ordered by the judge to suffer six months' imprisonment in Gloucester gaol, for simply doing what the dissenters *now* tell us it is every man's duty to do, namely, “resist all encroachments upon the rights of conscience!” Verily, such pious scamps ought to have their reward!

Is it not strange that protestants, who boast the free exercise of reason, and claim for themselves the right of private judgment upon all questions—whose religion originated with, and is based upon, the principle of dissent—is it not strange, I ask, that they should always be found in the ranks of persecutionists, always be found allied with, and aiding, intolerant governments to put down by violence the expressers of irreligious opinions. But the religious principle is now, as it has ever been, directly antagonistic to the principle of genuine liberality. The best protestants who figure on the page of history, have been false to their own principle, and though they claimed for themselves, have uniformly denied to others, the right of private judgment. Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were brought to the stake; but not until they had first, with cruel inconsistency, brought others there. Was it not Latimer, the pious, protestant Latimer, who preached patience to Friar Forest, hanged in chains round his middle to a gallows, and agonizing under the torture of a slow fire, for denying the king's supremacy? Answer, ye protestants, who boast the martyrdom of Latimer. Tell me whether he did or did not first make martyrs of others? Pennant tells us that Latimer never thought of his own conduct in his last moments, himself a martyr. And I readily believe it, for there are few religionists who think there can be anything inconsistent or criminal in conduct the most vile, if it do but serve to strengthen their religion.

Remorse for religious crimes never disturbs a genuinely religious man. When Cranmer was brought to the stake, he did not seem to recollect that but a short time before he had caused a poor silly young woman, named Jean Bocher, to be barbarously put to death for the expression of her opinions, upon the very same spot. No, that was a religious act—performed to strengthen pure religion, and increase the glory of God—but in the midst of severest torments, the torment of remorse for having signed his recantation rose high above the rest. As well observed by a modern author, Cranmer did not thrust his hand into the fire for a real crime, but for one which was venial through the frailty of human nature.

Protestants boast of their good Queen Bess as the most glorious, as she was the bravest of its crowned champions; but gracious and good though she may have been, determined stickler for the right of private judgment, as we are assured she was, yet too she could burn people whose religion was not of the right, that is, her own, sort. Holinshed relates that two Dutchmen, anabaptists, suffered in Smithfield, in 1575, and died, as we may well conceive they did, *with roaring and crying*. This, it is but fair to add, is the only instance of England's virgin queen having *burned* those who did not think exactly according to orthodox rule and measure—the truth being, that she preferred *hanging* to burning, perhaps because the continental burnings had raised to an immoderate height the price of wood, when rope was resorted to upon a laudable principle of economy. Indeed, we *know*, from a letter sent by Andrew Ammonius, Henry the Eighth's secretary, to Erasmus, that so many heretics were daily burnt during that detested prince's reign, that the price of wood was seriously raised. But enough of disgusting details connected with protestantism, its crimes and inconsistencies. It is sufficient if the reader bear in memory an unquestionable fact, that the progress of dissent in the country, from the days of Lollardism downwards, has been marked by crimes and inconsistencies which have no parallel in the history of any former eras—and that at this moment the seeders of our state religion, those popularly known as dissenters, are at once the most crafty, unprincipled, and tyrannical of the human race. The most numerous and deceitful of dissenting bodies are the wesleyan methodists. Of all kinds of religionists, these, in my judgment, are the most inveterately and insidiously hostile to liberty of every kind. At a meeting of the united committees of ministers and gentlemen appointed for the protection of the civil and religious privileges of the wesleyan methodists, held in the Wesleyan Centenary Hall, I find the law of toleration thus laid down:

One principle of religious liberty, which must now be considered as having been long since legally and constitutionally settled in this country, was well stated by no less an authority than that of the great Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, in his celebrated “Speech in the House of Lords, Feb. 4th, 1767, in the cause between the city of London and the Dissenters.” (See *Furmenaux's Letters to Blackstone*, second edition, Appendix, No. 2, pp. 264, 265.) The following passages from that speech are decisive on the constitutional claims of non-conformists to fair provision for their security and freedom in all legislative proceedings which involve their religious interests.

“It hath been said the Toleration Act only amounts to an exemption of protestant dissenters from the penalties of certain laws therein particularly mentioned, and to nothing more. The toleration act renders that which was illegal before, *now legal*; the dissenters way of worship is permitted and allowed by this act; it is not only exempted from punishment, but rendered innocent and lawful; it is established; it is put under the protection, and is not merely under the connivance of the law.”

Now, all this anxiety manifested by wesleyan methodists, to secure for non-conformists a fair provision for their security and freedom in all legislative proceedings which involve their religious interests, is in itself laudable enough. No one, save a red-hot bigot, or a gainer by state intolerance, can object to such “fair provision.” But how happens it that wesleyan and all other religious dissenters are so anxious to protect “religious interests,” while they are so reckless of “irreligious interests?” There are a very considerable number of intelligent persons in this country, who are irreligious from convictions of religion's false and mischievous nature—persons who are protestants in the sense of Bayle, that is, protesters against all that is said and all that is done with respect to religion. Now, I want to know how it happens that these persons' “interests” are so systematically set aside as of no consequence, or insultingly trampled under foot? With what show of consistency or honour can religious dissenters claim the law's protection against the tyranny of churchmen, while strenuously exerting themselves to hinder irreligious dissenters from enjoying like protection? Surely the atheist has just as good a claim to the law's pro-

tection of his person and interests, and ought to have just as much right to express his honest sentiments, as the Wesleyan, the Baptist, the Muggletonian, or any other dissenter. If dissent from legalised or established opinions is to be tolerated at all, the various developments of that principle should be placed on equal ground—a clear stage and no favour being granted to all, or no stage and no favour allowed to any. Did the government of this country adopt, and rigidly adhere, to one of these two essentially distinct lines of policy, the people would know what to be at—whereas its policy is so vacillating, so unsteady and variable, so rigorous to day and feeble to-morrow, that whether we have or have not liberty of conscience, is a question the answer to which is contingent upon the state of parties, and the passions thereby generated. The government education bill has done more to alter the composition of parties, to change their state absolutely and relatively, than any bill introduced for some years past. The hostile passions it has excited in the breasts of dissenters may be judged of from the subjoined paragraph, copied into the “Morning Herald” of April 17, from the “Bristol Journal:—

It is well known that in Bristol, as elsewhere, the dissenters are making a hard push to oppose the education clauses in the Factories Bill; and that which professedly most excites their hostility is the danger to which they state their sabbath schools are exposed. Now it appears to us rather strange that a body of men, who in all things that apply to other people, are advocates for free trade, should find fault with competition in an object so important, and so avowedly open to improvement as education. But leaving this as matter of opinion or taste, we have really been startled at seeing exposed in the window of a bookseller for “the dissenting interest” in this city, a tract, in the first page of which is broached the doctrine, that although education in religion is a good thing, it is not that which the state has a right to require. And that there may be “no mistake” on this point, it is further propounded, in explanation of the new doctrine, that if a parent choose himself not to believe in the existence of God, it is *tyranny* to require that his children be taught the truth on that subject. To treat this proposition—coming from a class privileged on the assumption of peculiarly tender “consciences”—in the way that it deserves, were to break a fly upon the wheel; and it is scarcely necessary to observe, that if the state suffered a generation to grow up without the knowledge of God, the laws, which most properly can only be enforced upon evidence, given on oath, would be of no use. A pretty state of things we should have, if mankind were governed for the benefit of “sabbath schools,” without religious instruction.

Passing over as foreign to my purpose the “Bristol Journal’s” opinion as to the necessity of cramming children with religious instruction, I think the reader will share the amusement I derive from observing how extra-liberal these dissenters are when the dissenting craft is in danger. How they protestantise even into atheism, when Sunday schools are likely to be put down. How quick they are to discover *tyranny* even in the act of teaching *true* religion to a child, if its parent should be atheistical enough to object thereto. How ready are they to give up their (in times of peace and safety) favourite doctrine, about the absolute indispensability of religious education, and to serve the cause of dissent, take up the position, that “although education in religion is a good thing, it is not that which the state has a right to require”—in other words, religion is a very good thing, but not an indispensably good thing. How, to sum up their character in one brief sentence, they play fast and loose with every principle of honour and truth, to obtain their own selfish ends.

## REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED TO AN INVESTIGATOR BY

## THE WORD

## E LO Q U E N C E.

It is as impossible briefly to *define* eloquence, as it is genius, to universal satisfaction; and equally difficult to say how far they are intuitive, and how far acquirable. The Encyclopedia Britannica discovers that oratory (or oral eloquence) consists of four parts—invention, disposition, elocution, and pronunciation—that invention has internal topics and external topics—that the internal topics are definition, enumeration, rotation, genus, species, antecedents, consequents, adjuncts, conjugates, causes, effects, contraries, opposites, similitudes, comparisons, &c. All this is according to Cicero. Phenologically speaking, ideality, causality, and comparison, may be said to be functions necessary to the production of eloquence. It is, however, very doubtful whether a knowledge and study of these details will originate eloquence on the

part of the student. Analysis and synthesis are generally vastly different in the ease with which they may be performed; and to critically examine, and to originate, are as essentially distinctive. You may teach the working of a mathematical problem, or the performing of a grammatical exercise by exhibiting certain self-evident axioms and mechanical rules, or you may make a draftsman by instructing the student in holding his tools, and practice will not fail to give him the necessary dexterity. But to teach the doing of that which requires the production of original ideas, or the tact to classify and compare, is a very different matter.

Helvetius, when he wrote his work on Man, like most mere theorists, for the first time handling important discoveries, seems to have overstepped the boundary of truth. To such a degree does he carry the doctrine of outward circumstance, that he makes everything depend upon it; even genius, whether in music, painting, or oratory. He says, at the commencement of his work, “I regard the understanding, the virtue, the *genius* of man, as the *product of instruction*.” This is indeed a bold assumption. He says again, “If I can demonstrate that man is nothing but the product of education, I shall doubtless reveal an important truth to mankind. . . . If we can prove that virtue and talents are acquisitions, we shall rouse the industry of the master and render him more assiduous in cultivating the virtues and stifling the vices of his pupils. . . . Of this we are certain; that we are as yet ignorant of the true principles of education, that it is at the present day reduced almost entirely to certain false sciences, to which even ignorance is preferable.” He briefly enumerates the causes of the intellectual differences among men, as follows: “They are reducible to two. The one is the different series of events, of circumstances and situations, the other, is to the desire more or less earnest to instruct themselves.” He compares the peculiar resulting intellectual powers, to the casual results of various substances thrown promiscuously into a chemist’s crucible. “Our memory,” says he, “is the crucible.” It is from the mixture of “certain matters thrown together that sometimes results the most astonishing and unexpected effects; and it is in like manner from the mixture of certain facts, without design in our memory, that ideas the most sublime and original result. All sciences are equally subject to the dominion of chance.” It is manifest by this that he attributes all intellectual phenomena to the operation of external influences. “A truth,” he says again, “that is entirely unknown, cannot be the object of my meditation, it may be considered as discovered when I catch a glimpse of it. The first surmise is here the stroke of genius. This surmise is therefore the effect of a word, a lecture, a conversation.” Helvetius has certainly given to the world great and important truths, but is the doctrine here developed *all* the truth? Has he not left out of his calculation an important element in his simile of the chemist’s crucible? He has surely overlooked the modifying action of the fire upon the ingredients, which produce a result according to the intensity of the furnace. One degree of heat applied to lead, renders it molten, and a further degree converts it into a dust or pigment called red lead. May we not compare the fire to organic peculiarity or power, so that although the same objects be presented, the inherent modifying principle of temperament and genius will occasion widely different results?

As regards the influence of circumstances, or education, there is surely a wide difference between creating genius or intellectual power, and offering materials by which it may become developed. External circumstances may stultify genius, or offer it no opportunity of manifesting itself, but it is very questionable whether it can create it.

Speaking of inequality of understanding, Helvetius asks, “When a human cause can explain a fact, why should we have recourse to one that is unknown, to an occult quality whose existence, always uncertain, explains nothing that we cannot explain without it?” But I would ask, whether his “known cause” will sufficiently explain the difference between an idiot, a man of ordinary powers, and a Byron? Will it explain the difference between the brute tribe and the human being, seeing that they both equally derive their ideas through the medium of the external senses? If not, then there must be something which he has left out of the reckoning.

An illustrating anecdote occurs to me. Macklin, whose inimitable personation of Shakspeare’s Shylock caused to be inscribed on his tomb,

This is the Jew that Shakspeare drew,



led the life of a humble Irish peasant till forty years of age, when, opportunity occurring to him to learn to read and write, he made rapid progress, and the bent of his inclination leading him to the stage, he quickly attained a first-rate excellence in a certain branch of the dramatic art. This anecdote is found in Thomas Holcroft's memoirs. I am sure we must all have experienced the different power some possess over others to work upon our sympathies and feelings, especially in theatrical representations—the late Edmund Kean, to wit.

On the other hand, it is amply notorious that the large portion of theatrical performers, who, "with all appliances and means to boot," having had opportunities of observation and practice, from their youth upwards, are never able to rise even to mediocrity. At the bar, the pulpit, and the senate, so different in degree, and varied in style, are the powers of eloquence displayed, that it seems to me the causes of such vast disparities must be sought for in other sources than those so ably urged by Helvetius. We have abundant instances of eloquence of a beautiful and forcible order coming from those who have never had the benefits of instruction in the arts of rhetoric or elocution—and yet its power upon our feelings, and to excite our admiration, is of a kind not to be excelled by the more refined orators of European academies. Long treatises may be written upon eloquence and elocution, but it would be a hopeless task to *form* it by rules deduced from any imaginary analysis of eloquence—and although we read that Cicero formed a school for oratory, we do not read that all the graduates were Ciceros. All that instruction can do with regard to eloquence is to discipline our judgment and increase our stock of facts, which cannot fail to render eloquence more copious and useful, but it cannot furnish those peculiar mental powers of ideality and arrangement, without which all instruction is vain, and the unsophisticated American Indian may give birth, undesignedly, to eloquence of so touching a description that few cultivated Europeans could equal. It is a curious fact, that the North American Indian, although so low in civilization, and apparently so organically incapacitated from adopting any principle of progressive improvement in the arts or intercourse, yet exhibits a natural power of language to a very great degree.

## MACHIAVELLI AND DOUBLE DOCTRINE.

By far the most cool, original, and finished expounder of *double doctrine* was the famous Machiavelli, who flourished in Italy, during the fifteenth century. He was the first who openly and consistently taught a complete science of political perfidy; but whether he intended by so odious an exertion of his talents to damage the people or their rulers, is still a debated question, and really to us it is one of slight importance. Here I entirely agree with Professor Stewart, that "the question concerning the *motives* of Machiavelli is of little moment, when experience has enabled us to pronounce so decidedly as to the practical effects of his precepts."

It is certain that "The Prince," perhaps the most able, and certainly, in itself considered, the most detestable of all his productions, has from the first hour of its publication, been the text-book of knaves and tyrants; whereas I am by no means persuaded, that any *people* have at all profited by it. It was the favourite book of that restless tyrant, Charles V. The crafty, unprincipled, liberty-hating Catherine de Medicis, called it her bible; and I gather from Condorcet, that—

About the period of the Reformation the principles of religious Machiavellism had become the *only* creed of princes, of ministers, and of courtiers; and the same opinions had contributed to corrupt philosophy. What was to be expected from a system, of which one of the principles is, that it is necessary to support the morality of the people by false pretences, and that men of enlightened mind, have a right to retain others in the chains from which they have themselves contrived to escape.

This is a fair statement of *double doctrine's* leading tenets: and from it we are warranted to conclude that whatever the *motives* of Machiavelli, the *effect* of his writings has been incalculably mischievous—has been, do I write? they are almost as deeply and bitterly felt now as at any former period. Lord Byron thought that the objects of Machiavelli, were altogether misunderstood, and warmly shields his memory from the imputation of being an instrument, or at all events an in-

tentional instrument, of tyranny. In note 29, appended to *Childe Harold*, Byron thus writes:

It will readily be imagined that the prejudices which have passed the name of Machiavelli into an epithet proverbial of iniquity, exist no longer at Florence. His memory was persecuted, as his life had been, for an attachment to liberty, incompatible with the new system of despotism which succeeded the fall of the free governments of Italy. He was put to the torture for being a *libertine*, that is, for wishing to restore the republic of Florence; and such are the unyielding efforts of those who are interested in the perversion, not only of the nature of actions, but the meaning of words, that what was once *patriotism*, has by degrees come to signify *debauch*. We have ourselves outlived the old meaning of "liberality," which is now another word for treason in our country, and infatuation in all. It seems to have been a great mistake to accuse the author of the "Prince," as being a pander to tyranny; and to think that the Inquisition would condemn his work for such a delinquency. The fact is, Machiavelli, as is usual with those against whom no crime can be proved, was suspected of, and charged with, atheism; and the first and last most violent opposers of the "Prince" were both Jesuits, one of whom persuaded the Inquisition, *beuche fosse tardi*, to prohibit the treatise, and the other qualified the secretary of the Florentine republic as no better than a fool. The father Possevin, was proved never to have read the book, and the father Lucchesini not to have understood it. It is clear, however, that such critics must have objected not to the slavery of the doctrines, but to the supposed tendency of a lesson which shows how distinct are the interests of a monarch from the happiness of mankind.

This is a generous, if not a just, view to take of Machiavelli's intentions in writing the "Prince," but as before remarked, it is of little consequence to us what his intentions or motives were. The utility or mischievousness of his writings is another and far more important question. Doubtless, many a writer, without pandering to tyranny, has greatly strengthened it. Such a writer, I am charitable enough to suppose, was Machiavelli. Governors, not the governed, profit by such treatises as the "Prince," especially in so low a state of general civilization as prevailed over all Europe during the seventeenth century. The *people* of Europe were as little prepared, at that period, to understand the "Prince," even if we suppose it to have been within their reach, as to rightly interpret the bible. I do not imagine that at this day, one in a thousand of the Italian peasantry has read the "Prince," nay, I doubt whether more than one of a thousand has even heard of it. Now, it is precisely for this reason, that books containing such doctrines as those of Machiavelli, are beyond measure dangerous. The few learn from them how to improve the art of tyrannising, and thus are enabled with an ease and safety, continually on the increase, to hold the many in subjection. It is, therefore, that while I incline to the belief of Machiavelli's desire to do good, to teach a lesson of liberty, by developing principles and systems, the most atrociously tyrannical, I am sure the good he contemplated has not been done. He was not the inventor of villainous *double doctrine*, but his writings gave it a form, a consistence, and an impetus, that is at this very hour not to be resisted. What other than Machiavellian principles do rulers now rule upon? Are statesmen, princes, and priests, wavering in the faith "that it is necessary to support the morality of those they govern by false pretences?" I do not ask, if they have abandoned such faith; no, such inquiry were needless; I only ask, do they falter? Do they hesitate or waver in the full application of the accursed principle that "the enlightened few have a right to retain others in the chains from which they have themselves contrived to escape?" Whigs, Tories, chartists, and socialists, men of every sect, and of every party, are all "much of a muchness" in respect to *double doctrine*: all are more or less tainted by this moral heresy, this treason against reason, virtue, and happiness. There are many individuals who never deal in *double doctrine*, but there is not a political or religious party in Europe, that steadfastly refuses to attain some ends by Machiavellian means, however shifty, various, or dazzling the disguises under which such means are commonly employed.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

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WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

LETTER VI.

I TRUST the facts and arguments already adduced have convinced your grace, if, indeed, you ever seriously questioned so plain a proposition, that nothing human can conceive the inhuman, in other terms, that no natural Being can have any idea whatever of an unnatural Being. Now, the God adored by Jews and Christians is confessedly unnatural. They acknowledge their inability to understand either how he exists, or the essential characteristics of his existence. Nay, even in the book your grace deems divine, the book said by Christians, as well as Jews, to be a record from heaven, a revelation of a God, from a God, it is nowhere stated that reason will help us to a knowledge of him—but, on the other hand, I find at least a score of texts warranting the conclusion that no human creature, however wise or learned, can know God. Perhaps the text most favourable to an opposite view of the question is that contained in chapter xi. of the book of Job, where Zophar, reproving Job, exclaims: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Now, the first of these queries, in its isolated shape, distinctly implies that no man can by searching find out God—nor does the second much mend the matter, seeing it warrants the conclusion that though the Almighty may, by much searching, be found out, he never can be found out unto perfection. But an imperfect knowledge in philosophical strictness, of any question or Being is not properly knowledge at all—and how far from perfection Zophar considered all human ideas of deity, may be judged of from the verse following that which I have quoted: "It (God's wisdom and nature) is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"—but I will not waste ink in proving what no man calls in question. Neither Jews nor Christians, notwithstanding the aid they pretend to have received from revelation, will venture to affirm that they know God, in other words, that they have found him out either to perfection or imperfection. They readily declare themselves *believers* in God—but your grace must be aware that it is precisely because they *know* not God that they *believe* in him. But I willingly admit that your grace, and other theists, are not only justified in believing, but bound to believe there is a God, if the evidence of such a Being's existence satisfies your judgment, and it is only because I cannot find either in human or natural books evidence that satisfies *my* judgment that I remain an unbeliever. Pious men refer me to the bible for a moral demonstration of God's being and attributes. Well, what kind of God do I there find pictured forth? Why a God who was no respecter of persons, yet selected an odious race, called Jews, from the great family of mankind to be his *favourite* people. I find it written of this God, that, after creating the world, and all therein contained, he modelled man in his own image, in

the image of himself \* created he him, male and female created he them; giving them dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth;" that when this strange work was accomplished, he placed man in a delightful garden, known by the name of Paradise, with absolute authority over the said fish, fowl, cattle, and creeping things; that he the Lord God, having formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, planted a garden eastward of Eden, and there he put the man that he had formed; that, after doing much that I have neither leisure nor inclination to enumerate, he commanded the man, saying: "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" that then—oh, strange to relate! but thus runs the tale—be said, it is not good for man to be alone; and, after instructing Adam (for so the man was called) how to name the fish, fowl, cattle, and creeping things, he caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and then took one of his (Adam's) ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; and the rib which he (the Lord God) had taken from man, made he a woman; that, after all this, and much more equally credible, as well as interesting, the subtlest of field beasts, for some mischievous purpose, best known to itself, tempted Eve to taste the fruit God had forbidden to be eaten, and presently succeeded in corrupting her husband; that, in "the cool of the day," this unfortunately odd couple "heard the voice of God walking in the garden," who called Adam unto him, and said, Where art thou?—then, having made sundry inquiries of Adam, as for example, "who told thee thou wast naked?"—hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I recommended thee not to eat?" the Lord God cursed the serpent, at the same time dooming it always to go upon its belly, and eat dust all the days of its life; then he promised to multiply the woman's sorrow and conception—dooming her to bring forth children in sorrow, and, after reproaching Adam for his weakness "in hearkening unto the voice of his wife," cursed the ground for his sake—assuring him that in sorrow he should eat of it all the days of his life—that in the sweat of his face he should eat his bread; then, after "making coats of skins and clothing them," assigns as a reason for such severity towards the imprudent pair, that man, by plucking the fruit, had become as knowing as himself, and lest "he put forth his hand and taste also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever," therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken; and that he might not get back again, God placed at the east of the garden cherubims and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.

I find in other parts of this revelatory record that your grace's God, the God of the Jews and Christians, the immense Being who created the worlds, announced himself to Moses as "I am that I am," and as "*Jehovah*"—a mark of condescension, we are informed, he had not deigned to bestow on Abraham,

\* See Pentateuch.



Isaac, or Jacob; that he hardened Pharaoh *on purpose* to multiply signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and convince the Egyptians he *was* the Lord; that to oblige the peculiar people, called Jews, he (the Lord God) swore that he would drive out the Canaanite, the Amouite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, but would not go up with the Jews to the land flowing with milk and honey, as he had promised them, *because* they were a stiff-necked race, and he might be tempted "to consume them by the way;" that the great God of heaven and earth had sundry interviews with the man Moses, to whom he announced his plans, explained his policy, promulgated his laws, and bitterly complained of the Israelites' stiffneckedness; that he promised blessings and threatened curses to the said Israelites; that his anger was kindled against them for committing whoredom with the daughters of Moab—when he sent among them a plague which swept away twenty-and-four thousand human beings; that, after thus *plaguing* his favourite people, his wrath was turned away from them by Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron, the priest, who, we are assured, had sufficient influence with him to set aside his *prior* intention of "consuming them" all in his jealousy; that he ordered Moses to avenge the children of Israel on the Midianites—to slay all the males—to burn their cities and castles with fire—to take all the spoil, and all the prey, both of man and beast—to *kill every male among the little ones, and every woman who had known a man by lying with him*—but all the women children who had not known a man by lying with him, he *bade* them keep alive for themselves!

These are some few of your God's doings *according to the pentateuch*—doings so inconsistent, senseless, and savage, that he who dare charge them upon the creator of our universe, must be the most dolishly daring of all creatures—doings so little likely to be *tolerated*, not to say *authorised*, by a mercifully omnipotent God, that though all the books in the world detailed it, nay, though it were so written in legible characters on the moon's face, I could not believe it! No, your grace, it seems to me incredible that a Being capable of not merely framing, but creating, all the worlds, should have given his sanction to acts so ludicrous and bloodthirsty that the worst of human tyrants would shrink from the commission of—acts that throw into the shade the worst enormities and follies that stain the character of a Caligula, a Domitian, a Nero, or an Elogabalus. I know it has been urged by many able divines that God is justified in dealing with his creatures in any manner that to him may seem fit. Bishop Watson, for example, who, in his "Apology for the Bible," insists that:

*It must be admitted that God has a right to punish wicked nations by the inflictions of judgment, such as pestilence, or famine, or by employing the sword of enemies; because we see that he actually does so in the course of his providence, and I can not see what essential difference there is between this and his giving a command to the Israelites to destroy the wicked Canaanites, for it is a notorious fact, that these latter were an abominable people.*

If your grace has read a "A Discussion on the Authenticity of the Bible, between Mr. Robert Dale Owen and Mr. Origen Bacheleer," you are without doubt aware that the latter gentleman had the temerity to advance arguments very similar to the above quoted opinion of Bishop Watson. These are Mr. Bacheleer's words:

Nature and revelation reveal a similar God; and this very objection, urged by my opponent, is an evidence in our favour. Admitted, that without the command of God, the exterminating wars of the Israelites would have been murder. So would be the devastation caused by the elements, if wielded by man, uncommanded by infinite wisdom. But when the omniscient utters the decree, when he lets loose the raging wind, and kindles up volcanoes, and heaves the ocean, and darts the lightning, and rends the earth, and bids the avenging steel leap from the scabbard, to lay some sinful nation in the dust; where crawls the wretch audacious that dares say to him, "what doest thou?" Come forth, ye puny race, to try your strength with the eternal. Encase yourselves in armour, impervious to his fiercest thunderbolts! Array yourselves with the elements of nature, hurl your fierce thunderbolts abroad, and hold the world in awe! Who are ye, that set your mouths against the heavens, and arraign the almighty at your bar? have ye an arm like God's? or can you thunder in a voice like him? Cease, then, the unequal conflict, "lest he tear you in pieces like a lion, and there be none to deliver."

How your grace esteems such reasoning as is contained in the two foregoing extracts, I cannot pretend to decide—but I presume you do not object thereto, for to me it seems morally certain that, if there is a God, and if he did by an act of volition, or otherwise, create the universe, we cannot reasonably avoid the staggering conclusion that all was fated or

destined to be, before the beginning, as it has been, is, and will be. The more intelligent of Swedenborgians hold this doctrine. They freely admit the monstrous inconsistency of those who believe in one eternal and omnipotent God, yet reject the idea of destiny. Emmanuel Swedenborg saw plainly that if a God called the universe into being, it could not, it is not, it cannot be, otherwise than as he willed. Nevertheless, to say the least, it is very rash on the part of orthodox christians to make such startling assertions as those of the Bishop of Llandaff and Origen Bacheleer. Men in general, it is proverbial, will go great lengths to serve an hypothesis, but still I confess to your grace it is to me perfectly astonishing that Christians should, for the sake of exposing the inconsistency of deists, readily and gratuitously admit that nature reveals just the same sort of God as is revealed in the pentateuch. Surely it might have been expected that in their haste to overwhelm deists they would not have totally forgotten there are such people as atheists in the world, who would hail such an admission with delight, as containing within itself the strongest imaginable evidence against the existence of a God, or at all events, a *good* God. Can your grace be ignorant that thousands, nay millions, object to the pentateuch God? They cannot conceive a good deity with such attributes as, in the pages of that book, are charged by the Jews upon their God—they cannot imagine a creator of heaven and earth the recipient or slave of the most unhalloved human feelings—they cannot for an instant tolerate the idea of a jealous, a changeful, an angry, a vindictive God—a God with worse than ordinary human frailties and follies—a God:

Partial, revengeful, and unjust,  
Whose attributes are hate, revenge, and lust;  
Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,  
And, formed like tyrants—tyrants might believe.

No, your grace cannot be ignorant of these facts—you cannot but know there are thousands, including many professing christians, who disbelieve that the acts attributed to Jehovah, by the author of the pentateuch, could or would have been performed by any being at once all-powerful and all-excellent. It has been declared by a very able writer, that men will be vicious so long as they act in the spirit of the pentateuch—an opinion, which your grace ought to know is fast gaining ground in all civilised countries. If the pentateuch had been written by a God, or by the command of a God, it might have been expected to breath a divine spirit, that is, a spirit of truthfulness, of mercy, and of justice—for if what is true, just, and merciful be not divine, divinity is of not the slightest use to us—nay, it is immeasurably mischievous—the essence of virtue consisting in the performance of acts, which as they emanate from, so are they directed by that spirit.

It is vain for theosophers of your grace's school to parry atheistical blows, by asserting that nature proves, or rather reveals to us, a God with the same general attributes as are ascribed to the Jewish God—for the atheist admits that fact—he unhesitatingly acknowledges that if there be a God of nature, we are warranted in concluding that he is very like the God described in the pentateuch. But does not your grace see that the pentateuch description is no better on that account? The pentateuch God is not one jot more respectable a personage, because an "adequate" contemplation of nature compels us to infer, that if *it* had an author, that author must be as strange a compound of inhuman nature, as the Jews' God is, according to their divine book. I have already granted that such an argument urged against a deist has great strength; but your grace should bear in mind, that if it is strong when wielded by theologians against deists, it is much stronger when wielded by atheists against theologians. Indeed, this grand blunder of these latter, reminds me of certain foolishly industrious politicians, who not only knocked their heads against a wall, but built up a wall on purpose to knock their heads against—for by labouring so hard and ingeniously to make it appear that no deist can reject the God of revelation, on the ground of his sanguinary, jealous, or otherwise hateful character, seeing that nature reveals just as indifferent a God, they have built up a wall quite hard and strong enough to batter their own heads against, thereby, of course, sparing their atheistical opponents the pains of rearing it for them. But, your grace, this folly on the part of christian theists may be easily accounted for, upon principles perfectly natural. The truth is, they have not been

PHILOSOPHICAL DIGESTS.

I.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HOBBS.

accustomed to deal with atheistical opponents. The controversial war has been carried on almost exclusively against deists—a class of religionists composed in part of atheists in disguise, and in much larger part of people the most philosophically unphilosophical, and least formidable to any other class of religionists that your grace can conceive. To the deist the God of the flood, the pestilence, the volcano, the earthquake, is a giant difficulty, for he must either deny that the pestilence which, in its horribly destructive course, levels the helpless inhabitants of cities, as grass is levelled by the scythe—that the earth, when, like some monster of fable, it opens its horrid jaws, as it would seem intent to crush and devour the trembling victims crawling upon its surface—or that fire-spouting caverns, as Vesuvius and Etna, which by their destructive eruptions have in a single hour burned whole cities with their wretched inhabitants—are not evils, and therefore not so many evidences against the existence of an all-potent and all-good Deity—or he is bound to receive the God of the pentateuch—at least he cannot reasonably object to the God there pictured forth, on the score of the hideousness or monstrosity of his features. The deist is not justified as a logician or a moralist, in refusing to believe in the Israelitish God, *because* that God commanded his chosen people, cruelly and cold-bloodedly to murder, in one day, fifty thousands of their fellow-creatures, while he believes in a God of nature, who, if he really exist, has destroyed by flood, famine, earthquake, plague, diseases the most agonising, and that most horrible of all human ills, starvation, countless millions of the human race.

I cannot close this letter without calling your grace's attention to a book of surpassing excellence, a book that neither your grace nor any other investigator should be without, as it is a book of books, treating the question of questions, in the style of styles. Hyperbole and jest apart, the book to which I refer is, taken all-in-all, decidedly the most usefully irreligious work I have had the happiness to read; and that is the reason why I so strongly recommend it to your grace; but another yet more potent reason is, that it contains arguments against the being of a God, which, I am of opinion, are not to be matched elsewhere—and am further of opinion, have not been answered elsewhere. The sooner, therefore, your grace reads it the better, as, to my certain knowledge, it is circulating very freely through all classes of society—and, if practicable, nothing your grace, or others in authority under you can do at this crisis, would so well serve the cause of christianity, as to satisfactorily answer that book forthwith. It is called "Good Sense," and may be had of any liberal bookseller for two shillings, which I promise your grace, as well as other readers of these letters, is "dirt cheap," no other book of the sort being half so intrinsically valuable.

The letters I now trouble your grace with, week by week, may be disposed of afterwards, that is, if they contain disposable stuff. I do not think you can answer either that book or these letters satisfactorily—but because I think you cannot, it by no means follows that you cannot. No, your grace should, in your warfare for "vital christianity," fight upon the *nil desperandum* principle, and like that literary leviathan, Dr. Johnson, if your pistol miss fire, knock your enemies down with the butt-end of it. As, no doubt, your grace is very well informed, European opinions, more especially with respect to religious principles and usages, are undergoing what may very well be likened to a chemical analysis. Be warned in time! The age of pure reason is now close at hand, or it never will be at hand! Remember that our laws have a religious sanction. We are told this from pulpit, bar, and judgment seat. It is, indeed, true, all our laws HAVE a religious sanction, which is the very best of reasons why we should satisfy ourselves whether those laws have or have not the sanction of reason, for if religion sanction our laws, while reason does not sanction our religion, how can we expect the laws to be other than injurious and corrupt? Yes, your grace, it is just because I am sure that not only our laws, but our customs, our opinions, in short, our whole thoughts and practice are affected, or, as some think, infected by religion, that I am specially anxious to examine its principle, and probe its results, to prove its truth and usefulness, or to expose its falsehood and mischievousness.

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

THE renowned Hobbes, of Malmesbury, was born in the latter half of the sixteenth century. His first literary effort, a translation of "Thucydides," was published about the year 1640, and is still much sought after, not so much on account of its intrinsic merits, for, indeed, they are not deemed, by competent judges, to be of the highest order, but simply as the first effort of an intellectual Hercules, whose subsequent labours have so astonished mankind, and perhaps more than those of any other author since his time, kept alive the spirit of investigation, and gave an impetus to general civilisation, the effects of which are even now distinctly visible. The first original production from his pen, was the famous book "De Cive," in which principles the most startling are laid down and defended with a *sang froid*, that, more than ought else, contributed to incense his enemies. When the "De Cive" appeared, its author (then more than sixty years) was in Paris, where he had fled for protection from the republicans of England, to whom his anti-republican bias, of which he made no secret in his book, had rendered him peculiarly obnoxious. His, in every sense of the term, great work, the "Leviathan," was a production some years later, whose principles and general features are the same as those contained in "De Cive," but its contents were even more offensive to others, and injurious to himself, than his "Thucydides," a labour avowedly antagonistic to the then rising spirit of democracy; or the detested principles of morals and government contained in "De Cive," as in the "Leviathan," he specially and bitterly denounced the tyranny of ecclesiastics, besides most wholesomely inveighing against every kind of ecclesiastical authority—a course which at once lost him the favour of those churchmen who had accompanied the exiled Stuart, afterwards Charles the Second, to France—for churchmen then, as is commonly the case with churchmen now, did not object in the least to any doctrines, however inimical to public liberty, or however likely to strengthen the hands of tyranny, if they had no tendency to disturb ecclesiastical privileges, or weaken ecclesiastical authority.

Hobbes was also the author of some other works, among which may be mentioned his "Observations on the Meditations of Descartes," as specially worth looking after by curiously *rich* readers; but the work that of all his productions seems to have given generally the most satisfaction is the "Treatise on Human Nature." Addison, whose opinion is esteemed by some, preferred it to all other writings of the same author—and to his opinion Dugald Stewart professed himself an "implicit subscriber," remarking besides, as his own judgment thereupon, that:

They are the only part of his (Hobbes) works which it is possible now to read with any interest, and they everywhere evince in their author, even when he thinks most unsoundly himself, that power of setting his reader a thinking, which is one of the most unequivocal marks of real genius. They have plainly been studied with the utmost care both by Locke and Hume. To the former they have suggested some of his most important observations on the association of ideas, as well as much of the sophistry displayed in the first book of his "Essay on the Origin of Knowledge;" and on the factitious nature of our moral principles; to the latter, among a variety of hints of far less consequence; his theory concerning the nature of those established connections among physical events, which it is the business of the natural philosopher to ascertain. It is from the works of Hobbes, too, that our later necessitarians have borrowed the most formidable of those weapons with which they have combated the doctrines of moral liberty; and from the same source has been derived the leading idea which runs through the philosophical materialisms of Mr. Horne Tooke.

So much for the names and chief characteristics of books written by Hobbes. I will now briefly explain and somewhat enlarge upon the leading principles of his philosophy. He maintained, first, that all men are by nature equal, and prior to government had all an equal right to enjoy the good things of this world—second, that man is naturally hostile to his fellows, solitary, and thoroughly selfish—the social union being by no means, as some have imagined, a consequence of noble emotions or amiable sympathies, but a league purely interested, suggested by no other views than those of individual advantage, and therefore a state of nature must be a state of mere brutishness, a state in which the idea of self prevails



over, or rather excludes all other ideas, where each individual makes provision for himself, without the slightest regard for others—a state in which each individual being thrown upon his own resources, having no other support than such as may be derived from his own strength and ingenuity, no opportunity is afforded him to regularly pursue industrial occupations, it being evidently a state in which no law could prevail save that of the strong, and therefore a state in which no labourer could safely calculate upon the fruits of his toil. In no other of his works has Hobbes probed the question so fully, or pushed his reasonings to such offensive conclusions, as in the *Leviathan*. By the term *Leviathan*, he wished to signify *body politic*, thereby, with his characteristic slyness, conveying an insinuation so galling to the pride of man, namely, that he is a beast of prey—a beast so fierce and unamenable, too, that he can only be kept from mischief by being firmly chained-up. This view of human nature, hopeless as it is false, he very ingeniously illustrated by interrogative species of arguments, such as the following: “Does not a man, when taking a journey, arm himself, and seek to be well accompanied? When going to sleep, does he not lock his doors? Nay, even in his own house, does he not lock his chests? Does he not there as much accuse mankind by his actions, as I do by my words?” He contended that every man must divest himself of the natural right he has to all things—the right of all men to all things being, in his opinion, considered relatively to practical results, no better than if no man had a right to anything. He contended that all societies must have somewhere within themselves a depository, or depositories, of their several forces—that as rivers and lesser streams are lost in the great aggregate, or ocean of waters, so is individualism buried in the great aggregate, called human societies, that, therefore society is, literally speaking, one person, which, like any other person, can only be perfect and act perfectly when it has one body—the multitude composing the republic or state conjointly with one head, called king, president, or any other name, the sound of which may be most acceptable. But by whatever name that chief magistrate may be called, according to Hobbes’s theory of government, his *will* should be regarded as the ultimate standard of right and wrong—his commands the most preposterous obeyed without the least hesitation—it being essential, in the working out of such a theory, that the voice of him who for the time being is the sole and exclusive depository of power, should be listened to by every citizen as the voice of conscience. Religion was treated by Hobbes as the mere thing of circumstance, a tool of policy, to be shaped and moulded to fit state exigencies. He deemed it of no farther consequence what men thought or spoke upon religious subjects, than inasmuch as their thinking and speeches thereupon tended to make people in general good citizens, that is, contented individuals, who would give the state the least possible trouble, and whose prime virtues would consist in veneration most profound for all established laws or institutions, and devotion most enthusiastic to the individual or individuals appointed by the state to administer them. Sir James Mackintosh said of Hobbes, that:

Having rendered religion the slave of every human tyrant, it was an unavoidable consequence that he should be disposed to lower her character, and lessen her power over men; that he should regard atheism as the most effectual instrument of preventing rebellion, at least of that species of rebellion which prevailed in his time, and had excited his alarm. The formidable alliance of religion with liberty haunted his mind, and urged him to the bold attempt of rooting out both these mighty principles; which when combined with interest and passions, debased by impure support and provoked by unjust resistance, have indeed the power of agitating society; but which are, nevertheless, in their own nature and as far as they are unmixed, and undisturbed, the fountain of justice, of order, of peace, as well as of those moral hopes, and of those glorious aspirations after higher excellence, which enliven and excite the soul in its passage through misery and depravity.\*

Against the whole of this passage I beg to enter my most decided protest—because, in the first place, it is a libel on the eminent individual whose writings are now under consideration—because, in the second place, it is a libel on political sense and right reason. It libels Hobbes, seeing that he did not desire to make religion the slave of every human tyrant, but simply to shield society from the tyranny of religion. He saw clearly that circumstanced as society then was, there must be tyranny somewhere, the only question being as to the character of that tyranny, and, doubtless, thinking religious despotism the worst of all despotisms, determined to

aid in the good work of weakening sacerdotal authority. I am quite willing to admit, not only that Hobbes desired “to lower religious character and lessen her power over men,” but to extinguish it. He had reasons in abundance, to justify such a desire on his part. He had seen the “formidable alliance of religion and liberty,” and felt, no less than saw, that it was an alliance far more formidable to the friends than to the enemies of freedom. The Stuarts were a tyrannical race, but it may fairly be questioned whether the despotism of either Charles, or even of the first James, when at its least endurable height, could match in atrocity the canting and most detestable tyranny of the puritans. Talk of the formidable alliance of religion with liberty—with liberty! indeed. Psha! there is no single fact better established than this, that the religion invariably spoils the liberty. I feel quite satisfied Hobbes was not ignorant of that fact, and having concluded that men being *naturally* slavish, must have tyrants to oppress them, he preferred they should be tyrannised over civilly rather than ecclesiastically, and as to his “regarding atheism as the most effectual instrument of preventing rebellion,” Sir James Mackintosh advanced nothing like proof, and I have been totally unable to discover any, that he regarded atheism in any such manner. The probability is, on the other hand, that he was convinced all reforms would be ineffectual, so long as people in general were religious, and that the speediest way of working out human regeneration is the atheistical way. Hobbes was too acute, as well as profound, a philosopher, not clearly to perceive and comprehend the *invariable*, if not *necessary*, connection between strong religious feelings, and the moral as well as physical degradation of those who are the recipients of them. I am the more inclined to this view of Hobbes’s political character, because his character as a citizen was without stain. His doctrines have been indignantly scouted by writers of all creeds and parties, they have been repelled by moralists, as well as theologians, with scorn the most intense—but I am not aware that any one has either breathed or written a syllable against the *character* of their author. Now, it is possible, I conceive, but not *very* probable, that such a man should, the moment he took pen in hand, be deserted by every vestige of amiable feelings, and coolly note down the vices of his species with no other view than to strengthen them. His writings are said to betray a complete palsy in respect of all moral sensibilities. Granted that to men with warm brains, who are fond of only seeing the bright side of human character, they may seem to indicate such diseased mental phenomena, it is not quite clear to me they justify the harsh conclusion, that he did not, in his own peculiar manner, sympathise with, and aim at widening rather than narrowing the liberties of, his fellow-creatures. It is not those whose pages are strewn with compliments to humanity, that have done the most to improve its character or brighten its prospects. The average of such authors are mere humanity-mongers, men who only bring to the literary market such phrases as will bring a good price, men of the Johnsonian school, who, like their master, will write up morals and human character on one side, while crying down liberty and systematically degrading that character on the other. What I so much admire about Hobbes is his sincerity. No one can conclude from his writings that he thought one thing and published another. Even his most violent enemies have admitted the candour, the integrity, and truthfulness of his conduct. His indifference to what other men thought when penning his own thoughts, amounted to recklessness, which was doubtless a fault, but certainly a fault on the right side, which few writers of the “great moralists’” school can justly be charged with the commission of. Now, sincerity is seldom allied with a strong desire to increase the miseries of the people, or to hand them over bound hand and foot to hopeless servitude. I therefore do not believe that the mind of Hobbes was “haunted” by the formidable alliance of religion with liberty—I rather conclude that he was haunted by the conviction that men never can be free so long as they are religious. I do not believe he strove to lower the character of religion in order to strengthen tyranny, I rather conclude that he thought by destroying religion, he would deprive tyranny of its chief support—and if it be urged that these are only my individual opinions, my reply is, granted, they are *my* opinions, and nothing more—but perhaps they are nearer truth upon this question than Sir James Mackintosh’s. The moral and political *philosophies* of Hobbes are doubtless open to well-founded objections, but that is surely a poor reason why we should tolerate libels on the *man*.

\* See Dissertation Second prefixed to Encyclopedia Britannica.

The fame Hobbes achieved during his own lifetime, as a cool and able writer of the most revolting paradoxes, has scarce been at all diminished by time. Bishop Warburton, who was the great theological gun of the last century, tells us, in his preface to vol. ii. of the "Divine Legation," that "the philosopher of Malmesbury was the terror of the last age, as Collins and Tindal are of this. The press sweat with controversy, and every young church militant would try his arms in thundering on Hobbes's steel cap."

From this testimony of Warburton's the reader may form a rough estimate of the great excitement caused, more especially among clericals, by Hobbism. Indeed, the influence of that most offensive of isms has been altogether astounding, for, as truly remarked by Sir James Mackintosh,\* even at the present day it is difficult to meet with a work on ethics which does not contain a refutation, or at least something so called, of Hobbism.

This amazing influence has been variously accounted for. Sir James Mackintosh thought it was owing to many causes, at the head of which may be placed that genius for system which, though it cramps the growth of knowledge, perhaps finally atones for that mischief by the zeal and activity which it rouses among followers and opponents who discover truth by accident, when in pursuit of weapons for their warfare.

In this view of what chiefly contributed to Hobbes's fame, and at the same time drew down upon his devoted head so heavy a load of opposition, I entirely concur, as I do also with the remark relative to the effects of systemism on "followers and opponents." Agreeing with Bacon, that "the over early and peremptory introduction of knowledge into arts and methods, from which time commonly receives small augmentation is a great error." I strongly recommend all determined sticklers for *system* to consider well the admonition of that illustrious philosopher in respect of methods and systems, which, to use his own phrases, "carrying a show of total and perfect knowledge, have a tendency to generate acquiescence."

Having furnished my readers with what I hope is a faithful and plain digest of Hobbism, it only remains for me to observe, that Hobbes himself, like almost all other extraordinary men, was fettered by extraordinary prejudices—but what Walter Scott said in relation to certain mistakes made by his favourite, the Duke of Wellington, namely, that "great men may be allowed to be greatly wrong," I feel the full force of when considering the follies and weaknesses of the truly great Hobbes. His hatred of all *experimentarians* was of a perfectly ridiculous character, and carried to the most extravagant heights, while the inveterate hostility that, through a long life, he displayed towards popular government, under all its forms, cannot but lower him in the estimation of all right-thinking men. The coarse, vituperative language in which he was wont to indulge, when he had *experimentarians*, especially if ecclesiastical, for opponents, may be judged of from the following sample of abuse addressed by him to Drs. Seth Ward and Walsh, two very eminent mathematicians of his time: "Go your ways, you uncivil ecclesiastics, unhuman divines, de doctors of morality, unasinous colleagues, wretched pair of indices and vindices academarium, and remember Vespasian's law, that it is unlawful to give ill language first, but civil and lawful to return it."

## NEW AND IMPORTANT "THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION."

NEITHER the principles nor the advantages of intellectual freedom are very well understood. The most civilised people are still afraid of free discussion—they cannot even tolerate a full expression of opinion upon religious questions. Englishmen boast loudly upon all convenient occasions of their attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty, but with an inconsistency only to be matched by its wickedness, they betray, while they laud those principles. The right to express freely his free thoughts, has not hitherto been allowed to an atheist in any country—and until the denier of a God may just as safely promulge his opinion as the affirmer of a God does *his*, it is farcical to talk about intellectual liberty. I hear and read much about the right of private judgment, but practically, it is mere twaddle, and practically the most

distinguished advocates of that right are the most contemptible of all twaddlers. The right of private judgment, forsooth! Why who can be hindered from judging? It is the right of public expression we need, and must have before moving far on the reform road. The right to judge, like the right to sleep, can only be taken from us with the life of which they are the indispensable adjuncts. They are rather necessities of our nature than rights, and can only be destroyed by the destruction of that nature. But to hear our pulpit and rostrum declaimers, one would imagine there was some magic in the words *right of private judgment*, when, in point of fact, they are mere fudge, protestant fudge, meaning nothing if they do not mean the right to express, upon any or every occasion, the opinions we, in our individual capacity, judge fit and useful to be expressed. Have protestants of any sect yet stood forward as realisers of so large a measure of liberty? There may be a protestant people in some sequestered nook of the globe, who love, cherish, and honour sincerity—who applaud instead of persecute men, that, differing in opinion from themselves, have the frankness to publish such opinion—but I neither have read nor heard of such protestants. All people who make a figure on the page of history, equally with all those with whom I have come into personal contact, are liberal enough to themselves. For themselves they not only demand the right of *judging*, but the right to *speak* and *print* what they judge—but for others, whose rule of judgment is not their rule, whose intellectual stature is higher or lower than their own, they have little sympathy—nay, it commonly happens that the expression of an opinion hostile to their own, will turn their milk to gall, destroy those sympathies of which so much parade is made towards those who *agree* with them in opinion, and supply their place by feelings of disgust and hatred the most intense. The hate of a religious fanatic is the most deadly of all hatred. With him, friendship, truth, sincerity, and honour are, when weighed against the interests of his true religion, mere bagatelles, to be set aside as mere moralities if they bar the road which leads to heaven. Insisting to them upon the glorious results likely to be produced by charitable, or rather just actions, in harmony with sound principles of freedom, is waste of breath, a casting savoury viands to dogs, and turtle to pigs—for thorough-going fanatics care nothing for any principles save their own principles, for any religion save their own religion, or for any interests save their own interests. Reason is wasted upon them. They hate all reasonings, by which they are not convinced, and when puzzled to find arguments wherewith to put them down, are ever ready to effect the *wished for* result by force.

Englishmen are shamefully fanatical. Fanaticism is their leading, as it is their most accursed characteristic. They are so thoroughly degraded by a multitude of true religions, that it has been hitherto found impracticable to unfetter the press and realise the right of expression for all, upon all subjects. That our press is not free, and that some men are not allowed to speak their conscientious opinions upon religious questions, is a fact so well proved by daily and hourly occurrences, that any laboured attempt to satisfy the reader thereon, would be superfluous. Our best political writers acknowledge that there is not, and never has been in any country, a free press, or a practical recognition of individual right to express irreligious opinions. I know the generality of them assure us there is quite freedom enough of every sort, that any more liberty would be licentiousness, and therefore have a demoralising tendency. They are clever fellows those writers, and hardly less generous than clever, for being perfectly satisfied with the liberty they themselves enjoy, they conclude all other folks, especially if common ones, should be equally satisfied, whether free or in bonds. Even ultra-radicals are not altogether divested of rank intolerance. They declaim most vehemently against tyranny, while themselves the most despicable of tyrants. They insist upon their own right to discuss political principles, however offensive or revolting such discussion may be to others, but they deny the atheist's right to discuss the principles of irreligion, because the consideration of such topics hurts the feelings of religionists. There is one Henry Vincent, a chartist orator, an individual who is not only reckless but unjust in his treatment of political opponents, a man who not merely outraged the feelings of the more staid, sober, and rich people of this country, but very largely contributed to endanger their lives and property—now will it be credited, that this very individual, this same Henry Vincent, who for years had shocked men's political opinions, who had done much more, namely, endangered their

\* See Dissertation Second, prefixed to Encyclopedia Britannica.



lives and property—will it, I ask, be credited that he should denounce me as an abusive declaimer, and declare, without blushing, that I could expect nothing less than twelve months' imprisonment, after so violently attacking people's prejudices? Yet Henry Vincent did say so. He said it in presence of a friend of mine, who published the fact in No. 31 of the "Oracle of Reason." The idea of a flashy reformer, who by his strong speeches had set the whole country in commotion, lecturing me about shocking people's prejudices, is exceedingly rich, and as such I recommend it to that section of the chartists who profit by the orations of Mr. Vincent—but at the same time I must express my decided conviction, that so long as they are led by men who are not ashamed to act so glaringly inconsistent, they are as likely to take the moon by its horns, as to make their charter the law of the land. Surely it is inconsistency most glaring and gross to maintain our own right to hurt the feelings of others by the expression of certain opinions, while abusing others who assert the same right, only in a manner somewhat different to ourselves. The truth is, that if individuals who think heterodoxly on questions of policy and religion, were charitable, or rather foolish, enough to determine not to utter such opinions, lest by so doing they might hurt the feelings of their neighbours, why civilisation would suffer instant check, and society, thus "brought up by the round turn," speedily take once more the road to utter barbarism. If this case of miserable inconsistency were an isolated one, it would perhaps scarce warrant a passing notice, but I grieve to say Mr. Vincent is a fair specimen of the *gens* radical, in these times of political degeneracy. There are some few admirable exceptions, but a swinging majority of our *soi-disant* patriots are no more consistent, and I will add honourable, than Henry Vincent. The bulk of them, to use a homely phrase, are tarred with the same brush, and my most hearty desire is that they may all sink in the same ship, for a more despicable, as well as incapable, set of politicians never convulsed a country, without in the slightest degree benefitting it. Will the people never open their eyes? Are they always to remain the dupes of appearance? Will they never understand that until all opinions have a free course nothing politically great and good can have a free course? Will they always act the part of the simple sheep that, according to fable, would have volves to take care of them? No matter what they call themselves, or under what pretexes they cover their designs, the enemies of any kind of discussion are the enemies of every kind of liberty. They should be shaken off by the people as a pest, a public and private nuisance, a foul obstruction in the way of progress.

What great reform of human institutions can be looked for while the chief reformers are silent with respect to religious errors, nay, while they are not only silent with respect to those errors, but absolutely prohibit their discussion. In the "Northern Star," of Saturday, the 8th ult., it is stated by the editor, in reply to a correspondent, that:

Nothing can be farther from our (the chartists I presume, he means) intention, than to identify Mr. Robert Owen, and his peculiar principles and cretches with chartism. We did not imagine it possible that any person could have formed such a conclusion. We dislike the infidelity of Mr. Owen, as much, and disclaim it as earnestly, as Mr. Wake or any other of our readers; but we do not let the absurdity of the socialist's metaphysical dogmas blind us to the excellence of their economical arrangements, or the proof which their experience affords of the power of united industry to provide physical and intellectual comforts for the masses. We have ever regretted, as a national evil, the infidelity with which Mr. Owen, and all the principal leaders of socialism, interlard their whole system, because we know its tendency to shut out from inquiry many ardent pupils, who would go entirely with them so far as their system is political.

The Star editor, and, I presume, writer of this suspicious paragraph, is a Reverend Mr. Hill, a gentleman whose ability is unquestionable, but whose fitness to take the lead in any great political movement I very much question. The world will never be reformed by parsons. Mr. Hill is a parson—doubtless a sincere one, and, judging from the above specimen of his doings, labours well in his parsonic vocation—but, as already said, the world will never be reformed by parsons—if reformed at all, it will be *in spite of them*. Mr. Hill is a politician of the "fair day's wage for a fair day's work" school, and not by any means a disciple of the school which teacheth that so long as men and women shall suffer parsons or priests to mystify them, and seek for anything short of a state of society in which there will neither be masters nor wages, so long they will be chasing shadows and neglecting substances. The reverend gent. says, he regrets the infidelity

with which Mr. Owen and all the principal leaders of socialism interlard their whole system. Nor do I doubt the sincerity of his regrets, as it is quite in keeping with the priestly character to regret every circumstance tending to emancipate the people from sacerdotal thralldom. He tells us he knows the tendency of this infidelity is to shut out, even from inquiry, many ardent minds who would go entirely with the socialists so far as their system is political. Now this may be true, and granting it true, what then? Is it credible that men who shut themselves out, rather than are shut out, from taking part in the work of political improvement, because their co-workers happen to differ with them upon questions purely speculative, could ever have intellect or nerve enough to establish, or aid in establishing, a sound political system? Men who refuse to act with others for the purpose of obtaining what both sides agree is good, because they differ with them in opinion in respect of propositions or things of which no one has the slightest conception, are surely not the men to purify the legislature of the country. Unquestionably there are many such bigotted people with minds ardent enough, to be sure, but by no means the best regulated. What I am very anxious to understand from such ultra-radicals as Mr. Hill is, how they propose to liberalise, or make tolerably tolerant those "ardent minds" whose religious fanaticism is of so scorching a character that they will not aid the socialists to achieve a great political good, because socialists have interlarded infidelity with their whole system? Mr. Owen has often declared, that every vestige of religious error must be annihilated before the truths on which alone his system rests can be understood. The declaration was a wise one. It is madness to hope men can be politically free while they are religiously enslaved—and how, save by debating and probing religious ideas, can we expect to purify them if only corrupt, or destroy them if utterly false? If priests did not meddle with politics it might be politic not to meddle with priests—but religion is a fearful thing—its influence is everywhere felt—it ramifies and spreads itself through every nook and corner of the body politic. Then why, in the name of common sense, should we shrink from the investigation of that which plays so important a part in all human economies? Why burke a question which, of all others, it is important we should have clear and just ideas upon? If religion mixes itself up in all human concerns, surely it is not good any members of a state should remain ignorant of religion's true nature. But if men are to be scouted because they are infidel, or if, when infidel, they are to hold back their infidelity lest faithful fools should take offence at sincerity, I can see no end of frantic bigotry and political injustice. Talk of making a people free by charters or acts of parliament, who love religion, and religiously hate those who cannot accept their abominable absurdities as divine truths! Free them by fools'-caps!—for they will accomplish the work equally well! The late Richard Carlile declared in 1831, that:

The secret of all the errors committed in human society, is that its aggregate brain has been kept in a state of insanity about God. What in philosophy every wise and learned man will confess himself totally ignorant of, priestcraft hath commanded and demanded that we shall understand, so as to worship and make it the scope and bearing of all our actions. The priests have presented to us a catechism and articles of faith, by which we are bound to give them answers to their questions, and after which we are fraudulently told that we need learn nothing more. This has become a bar to all human improvement; and no first man hath ever ventured to learn and teach more, without getting his body burnt, tortured, or imprisoned. Every attempt therefore to elucidate this great riddle, to break through the trammels, the snares, and the pits, which the priests have prepared for us is praise-worthy, and makes of man his fellow-man's creditor. In bonds, in the forum, or in the arena of public discussion, by the pen, with the press, I will never shrink from the great moral task.

Nor will I. To me all other objects seem insignificant, when compared with that of setting entirely free the tongue and the press. What opinions may prevail in the great struggle which is now inevitable, is of little consequence, if they be true ones. Now, it is free, full, and open discussion upon all questions, that can alone help us to truth upon all questions. Persuaded of this fact, I hold all men enemies to human improvement who directly or indirectly obstruct investigation, and all action, whether individual or associative, good, if it contribute to that glorious end. The people should no longer suffer themselves to be gulled into even an appearance of acquiescence with the present state of things. They

\* See Prompter, No. 29.

should be content with nothing less than entire liberty of expression upon religious as well as other questions. That liberty, I repeat, has never yet been enjoyed in this country, notwithstanding all the boastful noise made by canting speech-makers about our glorious land of liberty. I was much gratified by the able manner in which the "Morning Chronicle" dealt with this free discussion question, in the year 1831. Its editor said, amongst other excellent things, that

Free discussion has really no existence. In some countries there is a greater approximation to it than in others. In all countries there is the utmost freedom for those who entertain prevailing opinions. Argument, invective, abuse, railery, are on one side legitimate weapons of controversy; on the other, offences which deserve the utmost severity of the law. No man disapproves of ridicule or sarcasm employed in a good cause, but it is detestable to employ them in a bad cause; and the cause of which he approves is always the good cause, and that of which he disapproves is always the bad cause.

Certainly. Men never think their own opinions false opinions, or their own causes bad causes. Oh, no, their own opinions must be true, and their own cause must be the best of causes in whose defence and support may very properly be enlisted every species of argumentation. Ridicule, satire, invective, wit, and sarcasm, are pressed into the service with great eagerness. Even true religionists do not disdain such auxiliaries, when fighting for their creeds and worship, though they are sadly annoyed if irreligionists fight against those creeds and worship with similar weapons. I have always found that abuse, banter, and even scandalous lying, are all thought well enough by christians, when brought into play for the benefit of christianity—but woe to the atheist who, when attacking religion, commits the "big sin" of garnishing his discourse with invective, or gives it a strong seasoning of wit and sarcasm. It is only because religionists have so often felt the fatal effects of banter, ridicule, invective, railery, and sarcasm, that they have so great an objection to them—but methinks it furnishes a valid reason why their opponents should never cease to use them. I do not remember ever to have heard of a practical chemist who grew angry if rallied about his chemistry—or a geologist who was driven to desperation by witticisms directed against his science—or an astronomer who called upon the magistrates to protect him from the ignorant invective of some open-mouthed opponents—the reason being, that chemists, geologists, and astronomers, have no direct interest in always thinking precisely in the same manner. They are, besides, men of facts, who do not presume to talk about what neither themselves nor any body else understand—and therefore are seldom angry when what they do or say is called in question. But theologians are an odd, an altogether peculiar sort of people—they are themselves alone, and their science is an altogether peculiar science, having nothing in common with any other science. Geology, astronomy, chemistry, and all other profane sciences rest upon facts, and their professors appeal to facts in justification of what they teach—and while, as Richard Carile justly said, priests make us give *their* answers to *their* questions, we commonly make mere men of science give *their* answers to *our* questions. If teachers of profane science are questioned, they are in almost all cases delighted, as such questioning furnishes them with the much longed-for opportunity of explaining the science they love and desire to see brought within the reach of their hearers. But where are the teachers of divine science who wish to be questioned, or will even tolerate questioning? No, no, *their* knowledge being of the unknowable species, they shrink appalled from public investigation. They cannot bear, and therefore will not tolerate free discussion. If theology rested upon well ascertained facts, instead of ill-imagined fictions, is any one so absurd as to suppose its professors would dread discussions, or hate those who dispute the truth as well as the utility of their creeds? If theologians had a cause to support capable of being well and honestly supported, is it likely they would fall into such towering passions, as they almost invariably do when their doctrines are roughly handled? According to an old story, when a certain illiterate country clown was observed to listen with great attention to harangues delivered by two debating philosophers, not one sentence of which he thoroughly understood, a by-stander asked him how he could be profited or amused? Oh, replied the countryman, I do not know what they are being a talking about, to be sure, but I know which gets the best on it, 'cause the other gets into a passion. Now, that friend hawbuck came to a right conclusion, I have no doubt, and the reader may confidently assure himself that men who shrink from

investigation, or grow angry when their opinions are dissected, give proof of the indefensibility of such opinions—or at least, such conduct on their part positively proves that they are not competent to defend them.

None who can successfully defend their opinions are fretted and annoyed when those opinions are called in question. Theologians are the most uneasy, fretful, and intolerant men in existence. They are so simply because it is their business to maintain the reasonableness of creeds, forms, and ceremonies, which are altogether repugnant to reason. The wit of man cannot make those propositions appear true which are manifestly false—yet are the wits of theologians no otherwise employed than in attempting to achieve such impossibilities—and the worst of it is, the employment, though productive only of mischief to all unconnected with the craft, is to the craftsmen the most pleasant and profitable to be conceived—for, being paid by the day, not by the piece, and being well protected by stringent laws from the assaults of reason, few occupations are altogether so desirable to individuals who have no objection to preach anything for a good fat living—the world wags most prosperously with them. The church of this country, whose priests positively receive more of the public money than all other priests put together, is well known to be a common refuge for the destitute sons of our aristocracy. By our primogeniture laws, the eldest sons of families become sole possessors of the family wealth, while their less lucky brothers and sisters must either starve or be otherwise provided for. Well for the male portion of disinherited sons of aristocracy, the army and navy are found very convenient roads to fortune, but the most convenient of all aristocratic institutions for the aristocracy is the church. The church, in short, is something worse than a rookery—for there may be seen every sort of unclean bird, most industriously caw, cawing, while well-feathering their nests. It is a perfectly understood principle of aristocratic action, that all disinherited fools of families—without wit enough for the law, or courage enough for either army or navy—should be made parsons. Now, though fools may be as well acquainted with the unknowable as wise men, I do not think they are the sort of individuals to love or court discussion. Such people are much more likely to be shocked than convinced by opponents who question the truth, and rail at the absurdities of that religion without which they, poor young gentlemen, would have no means of support. The doctrine very much in vogue amongst all religious, and even some irreligious classes, is that no matter what may be the religion of a state, something is due to the feelings of those who have been brought up in the idea that its ceremonies are sacred, and that they even endanger their own salvation by looking on with indifference while they are desecrated. The Morning Chronicle writer, whose judicious observations on our supposed freedom of the press I quoted above, is one of these apologists for bigotry. He is of opinion that a protestant who, in a catholic country, knowingly shocks the feelings of the people is deserving of punishment—that half the names in "Fox's Book of Martyrs," and in "Scott's Worthies," were as deserving of punishment as the Rev. Robert Taylor—that the founders of the quakers, who entered churches (steeple houses) and disturbed the service, were deservedly punished, and that nine-tenths of the missionaries from this country are guilty of a want of regard for the feelings of the people whom they visit, and have no right to complain of the consequences.

Now this is a lame apology for persecutors, protestant or catholic. It is an apology that confounds what ought never to be confounded, namely the expression of opinion, with acts of physical outrage. I agree that the quakers who entered churches and unnecessarily disturbed the service were deservedly punished, and did deists or atheists imitate quaker example, they ought to be punished for such—it cannot be tolerated in a free state that any one class of its population should be allowed to disturb the worship or destroy the churches of another. I agree that half the names which figure so advantageously in Fox's Book of Martyrs, richly deserved the punishment they received—not, however, for expressing their opinions, but for violent outrages on the persons and property of others. If they had confined themselves to the expression of their own opinions, whatever those opinions were, and not have attempted, by personal violence, to hinder others from expressing theirs, they ought not to have been meddled with, but when they acted as well as spoke, and abridged the liberties of others while demanding their own, the state's duty it was to put them down. I do not al-



low that Fox's Martyrs or Scot's Worthies, of the sort here referred to, were as deserving of punishment as the Reverend Robert Taylor—because the Rev. Robert Taylor was not deserving of punishment at all, and therefore should not have been punished. I am not aware that he went into churches to overthrow the altars and assault the worshippers—if he had done so, if he had imitated the early christians, who did the like for pagan priests and altars, he should, for the good of society, have been handed to a madhouse or a whipping-post. But Mr. Taylor committed no offence save the venial one of castigating priests, and exposing in a public assembly the fabulous nonsense they have, through a long course of ages, palmed upon the credulous as divine truth. Nor did he force people to hear him, he simply *invited* them, and surely very sensitive, easily-shocked individuals were not obliged to accept the invitation—but because religionists of the “ardent” school are silly enough to think they “endanger their own salvation by looking on with indifference” while their doctrines are attacked, or, as the phrase is, desecrated—is a padlock to be put upon the mouth of dissent? Is the book of nature to remain unread, lest the reading should shock the rampant idiocy of religionists? Why this very writer of the Chronicle acknowledges, that it is not possible to overturn or reform a religion without doing violence to the feelings of those who profess it. He acknowledges that the coarse abuse and open ridicule of some of the sacraments of the catholic church, did more to shake that creed with the million, than the most learned disquisitions. He says the quakers have made no converts since they became rational—and unitarians seem destined never to be a numerous sect, because they do not address themselves to the senses but to the understanding. Nay, he goes so far as to declare that the first christians who entered the temples and destroyed the statues of Jupiter and the other deities, did more, probably, to make converts than the reasoners. Now, I agree that no religion ever was, or can be, overturned, without its opponents doing more or less violence to human feelings—but that is a poor argument against their being overthrown, and while I allow it is not wise or just in any cases to inflict pain unnecessarily upon our fellow-beings, the truth should be spoken at any conceivable cost. Like Guizot, I am far more affected by the errors than the sufferings of human beings—for suffering is an effect of which error is the cause, I therefore aim at destroying the former, while comparatively heedless of the latter; and it is because free discussion will infallibly destroy error, that I view it as an object paramount to all others.

The foregoing remarks were suggested by a prospectus now lying before me. It is the prospectus of a “Theological Association,” established for the following objects—Free inquiry into the religious idea—religious systems and modes of worship—their origin, progress, present state, and prospects, with a view to the discovery and promulgation of truth, and the overthrow of error. I am told that the members meet to discuss questions of this character, every Tuesday evening, a little after eight o'clock, at Bailey's Coffee House, New Compton-street, Soho—and that no charge is made for admission. The prospectus informs me that this association does not propose to set up and defend, neither will it start with the admission or denial of one particular set of past or present opinions, in preference to others on theological subjects—that while endeavouring, in documents published under its sanction, to avoid language reproachful, denunciatory, or calculated needlessly to offend, it will submit all subjects which may engage its attention to full, fearless, and searching investigation—and that attaching itself to no prevailing opinions or systems, theological or anti-theological, the association invites with the greater confidence the co-operation of the sectarian, the religious, the sceptical, the non-religious, the anti-religious, the theist, the atheist, &c., with the simple recommendation of the endeavour on the part of each, to set aside preconceived opinions, and co-operate in a spirit of investigation, instead of controversy; considering that none need be deterred from becoming a member, whose aim is the acquisition of truth instead of the strengthening of prejudices.

The means suggested as most likely to realise these important objects are thus stated:—

Research into the origin, history, and tenets of mythologies. Inquiry into the question of the existence of God. Investigation of the design argument. Inquiry into the authenticity of the Jewish, christian, and other scriptures held sacred. The registering of theological arguments, distinguishing such as

remain unanswered—such as have been replied to without being disposed of—or such as have been refuted. *Discussion, debate, or essays, oral or written.* The formation of a library, and the facilitating, for theological students, access to private or public libraries. Correspondence with branch or similar associations, or eminent theologians. Announcement of new works, lectures, &c. The issuing of *new, translated, or reprinted tracts or works.* Establishment of a periodical organ. Subscription—From active members, on a scale to suit the humblest means. From honorary members, of an amount calculated to afford the opportunity of extending the society's operations. Donations, contributions, and other auxiliary means.

Such are the *objects* and such the *means* of this new theological association. They are both most excellent. Associations based upon such principles should at once be formed by investigators in all parts of the country. They are imperatively called for by the new feelings, new opinions, new wants, in short, the new circumstances which the last fifteen or sixteen months' anti-religious agitation have called into being. All searchers after truth should now band themselves together in order to achieve and rest content with nothing short of achieving entire freedom as respects the investigation of theological questions. Every investigator should at once become a member of this association, though he may not be able to attend its meetings. The women, too, should bestir themselves. They should take the lead in these glorious pursuits, and no longer be satisfied ignominiously to follow where their “masters” have first trod the way. They (if that be possible) are even more to be benefitted by the acquisition of truth and the *weakening* of prejudices than men. Women should never forget that their liberties and position as members of a commonwealth, are contingent upon the state of civilisation in such commonwealth. Where men love knowledge and respect virtue, they love and respect women—but where errors, intolerance, and cruelty bear sway, women are always unhappy because always slaves. Instead, therefore, of wanting to be asked, they should rush to join this theological or any other association, whose principle is perfect freedom, and chief aim the increase of knowledge and diminution of error, with the mischievous prejudices which are its inseparable companions. There is no existing society or association that has not either repelled or betrayed the principles of free discussion; and therefore it cannot surprise us to find they have rather tended to foster prejudice than to destroy it, to bolster up falsehood rather than achieve truth. Where is the society or association that has ever dreamt of questioning, or willingly allowed to be questioned, the existence of god? Others may know of such an association, but I don't. In chartist halls the members are forbidden to discuss questions of religion. In our regularly respectable and respectably regular mechanics' institutes, politics is a non allowable question. The chartists will suffer political but not religious, and anti-religious, debates—but the more reputable class of knowledge-seekers, or rather knowledge-hinderers, at mechanics' institutes, will have nothing said about either religion, irreligion, or politics. Here I am a little wrong, for the presidents, vice-presidents, and other leading men at such institutes are parsons, or their hangers-on, who have no objection in the least to their lecturers fiercely attacking irreligion, though they will not tolerate a syllable against true religion, that is, the religion of the said parsons and hangers-on. The socialists in their corporate capacity tolerate every kind of debate upon all sorts of questions, and they are the only parties who do act thus liberally—but even among them may be found a very large number of persons who shake their wise heads, shrug up their shoulders, and exhibit sundry other symptoms of annoyance when the God-question is brought into full view. In the socialist's ranks are to be found the most truly enlightened and liberal men of the age—but I have excellent reason to know there is not among the aggregate of socialists, or the aggregate of any society in the world, that high-toned devotion to well understood principle, or eager enthusiasm for free discussion, which should be manifested by every class of men as well as every individual man.

✍ In No. 8 of the INVESTIGATOR will appear the first of a series of Letters to Lord Ashley, upon the all-absorbing and all-important Education Question. To be continued every alternate week till completed.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

## LETTERS ON THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

ADDRESSED

TO LORD ASHLEY.

I.

MY LORD—Though I do not subscribe, without some considerable limitations, to the doctrine that public men are public property, I am, nevertheless of opinion, that those who, like your lordship, choose to take a prominent part in national affairs, should be prepared to endure with stoical indifference the advice or censure individuals who are politically opposed may think fit to inflict upon them. Such inflictions are a part of the price usually paid for political distinction—at least, that kind of political distinction your lordship has achieved. You have signalled yourself as the friend of factory children—of those helpless, much-abused, and greatly-neglected miniature human beings who are victimised by the demon of avarice in those earthly hells called mines and workshops. You have declared war, if not against the *system*, at least against the *practice* that legally murders periodically and by wholesale the wretched offspring of England's no less wretched artisans. You have perseveringly, and to a certain extent successfully, insisted that those miserable children should be less worked and better educated. I have watched your evidently well-meant efforts in this noble cause, not so much with a hopeful, as a suspicious, eye—for I have long clearly seen that you are not the man to deal *thoroughly* with so vast a question, or calculated materially to assist in the all-important work of radically improving the physical or moral condition of factory children—and it is with the view of explaining *why* I think so, as well as completely sifting the education question, that I purpose inflicting upon your lordship this series of letters. So open a confession will, I trust, serve the double object of shielding me from any charges on the score of impertinence or want of candour.

My lord, a political crisis has arrived. The affairs of this country can no longer be administered in the bigotedly unjust spirit they hitherto have been. The children of poverty must be educated—that is a settled question. No government can any longer shirk or set it aside. Even churchmen, always the last to understand either the utility or necessity of any kind of improvement, begin to feel that knowledge can no longer be denied to the poor. They have resisted to their utmost the march of intellect, but general civilisation has proved too strong for them, and the question now agitated by influential politicians is not whether the poor's children shall be educated, but simply, what is the best sort of education the state can provide for them? This is the great question which is now convulsing society from its centre to its circumference—and the question that, perhaps, more than all others, it is essential the intelligently active among politicians should well understand the nature and true bearings of.

Your lordship knows very well that the church of England has uniformly opposed every attempt, made either by enlight-

ened individuals or public bodies, to give the poorer classes of society *secular* instruction. That church has always been in battle array against every form and kind of useful knowledge. It is still the same old church it ever was. It has somewhat altered its tactics—but the *objects* for which it now struggles, and the *spirit* of its supporters, are the same as at all former periods of its history. Churchmen are at length convinced of the awkwardly dangerous position in which they are placed. They dare not now stand before the world avowed opponents of education, for such an avowal would be the signal for their destruction. No, they are not such wrong-headed bigots as to run full-tilt so fatal a career—but as they doubtless conceive that the next best thing to keeping the people in utter ignorance is to cram them with *false* knowledge, not being any longer able to do the former, they are labouring heart and soul to effect the latter. Yes, my lord, the clergy of England are now convinced of their former error in allowing dissenters, especially irreligious ones, to take the lead in educating the poor. But upon the better-late-than-never principle they are at this moment making a desperate effort to regain the influence they so supinely allowed to be wrested from them; and if any evidence were wanting of their intention, to debauch and stultify the intellects of all entrusted to their care, the new bill, *nominally* to provide employment and education for children in factories, but *really* to provide rich sinecures and uncontrollable authority for church parsons, furnishes such evidence in quantity most ample.

My lord, I am not sorry the tory government has been *mad enough* to introduce that bill. It is an infernal bill—vile in its principle, and dishonest in its details—but it has done a marvellous amount of good—it will do a good even yet more marvellous. The bill is at once the most disgraceful to its authors and useful to the nation that ever was brought before parliament. Why do I write this? My lord, I will briefly tell you.

The bill has unmasked the established, and terribly alarmed the wishing-to-be-established, clergy. The former, by goading on our ministers to the introduction of this *lucky* measure, stand confessed the sneaking, malignant, unrelenting foes of all dissent—while the latter, thrown into an agony of fear lest the means of moulding a large section of present and coming generations to their will should be taken from them by this measure, are furiously wrathful—displaying towards their spiritual mother a pious rage that knows no bounds either of decency, truth, or moderation. Now, my lord, upon the principle that when thieves fall out honest men sometimes get their own, I greatly rejoice that these two great divisions of priests have something to squabble and perhaps cut each other's throats about—for who can tell to what length their flaming indignation, may tempt them, fanned as it is by their mutual sense of hourly increasing danger. In my judgment the people of England have abundant reason to be grateful to Sir Robert Peel's government for so opportunely throwing the apple of discord among these pious bands of "surprised ruffians," who, if not weakened by intestine divisions, would plunder without limit or restraint, drench the earth with infidel gore, and stifle the faintest whisperings of reason. There



fore, my lord, do I most heartily rejoice that this atrocious education bill is now before parliament.

Besides, its appearance at this crisis has given rise to a most useful discussion of educational principles and plans, that is likely to be productive of most excellent results. I perceive that Mr. J. A. Roebuck, the member for Bath, has pledged himself, in a speech lately made in the face of his constituents, to propose for adoption by the House of Commons, a system of education based on moral doctrines alone, and totally irrespective of any creeds or religions whatever. This, my lord, is one consequence of the new-fangled factories employment and education bill, and an immensely important consequence it is. Nothing short of keeping morality clear of religion, and teaching the people science, in scientific language, instead of theological mysteries, fictions, and abominations, which they are now taught in language every-way suited to such teaching, *will* content, or *ought* to content, the real friends of education. It is absurd to suppose the factory, or any other *poor* children will be *secularly*, while they are *religiously* educated. Why, in this very bill, to which I have called your lordship's attention, there is no provision for, nor even mention made of *secular* instruction. No, they are to be religionised—and that's all! Their morals are to take care of themselves. A knowledge of earthly things, of their duties, rights, relations, with the general phenomena of nature, they are to pick up amid factory dust, on the road side, or anywhere else, if more convenient—the bill making no provision for matters so profane. These it leaves to the carnal-minded, the worldly, and the infidel, as though its framers had no other object in view, save that of stultifying the intellectual and moral sense of our population, in order more easily to idiotise them by doctrinal religion.

As your lordship is a favourer of moral and religious education, I presume that you will oppose Mr. Roebuck's promised motion for basing a national system of education on moral truths and moral truths alone. Such a system the nation needs, and such a system the nation should imperatively call for. The people should lose no time in getting up petitions in support of such an education for the poor—and those of them who hold the right of suffrage should call upon all representatives who oppose so salutary a measure at once to resign the trust that, by such opposition, they will prove themselves only fit to abuse. Were I an elector, no man should have my vote who hesitated for an instant to support an educational system whose principles are deduced from known facts—whose practice is in harmony with the nature of men and things, as shown to us by the experience of ages, and whose whole machinery is totally irrespective of any creeds, worship, or mysteries whatever. Yes, my lord, this is the sort of education all classes require, but more especially the poorer classes, for in *them* religious errors take deeper and more fatal root than in the rich, whose earlier acquaintance with the facts of science, as well as practices of art, neutralises, though it seldom destroys, the poison of theology. But the poor have no defences against their priestly tyrants. Almost utterly destitute of rational information, and early taught to think the full exercise of reason a *sin*, can we feel astonished that they are intellectually dwarfed, and palsied, with a predisposition to receive as divine truth, not to be doubted on pain of eternal torment in the flames of hell, doctrines the most wretchedly atrocious and horribly absurd that ever fell from the lips of the most religious fanatics?

Your lordship being of opinion that all education should have a mixed basis of moral truth and religious conceits, is called upon to show, not only that secular instruction of a full, wise, and generous character, is inadequate to the production of virtuous dispositions in those subjected to its influence, but also that religious instruction, superadded to secular, will greatly improve the latter. Indeed, my lord, before talking, as you so often do, about true religion being an indispensable element of all sound education, you should decide, not merely to your own satisfaction, but to the satisfaction of others, what constitutes true religion, what is its essence, and by what *infallible* marks or signs it may be distinguished from the myriads of false religions which have made of earth one scene of strife, bloodshed, and all conceivable iniquities. My lord, by what text are we to determine which religion is true of the many taught to us by priests as such? There can be but one true religion—and before religiously educating the people, our legislators should determine in what that true religion consists. Men generally agree about moral

truths—while scarce two individuals think exactly alike about the truths of religion—and the reason is, morality concerns human and natural action—whereas, religion concerns that which is *supposed*, for it cannot be *known*, namely, the inhuman and unnatural. The very principles of religion are mere negations of all knowledge. They cannot be proved true—they cannot even be understood, because it is not in human nature to comprehend that which is a negation of every thing natural, or acknowledge as true principles or propositions, imaginary conceits about inhuman existences and actions. Surely, my lord, it is incumbent upon those who assume to themselves the right of educating the people, to found their systems of education upon principles that can be proved true, practices that can be proved rational, and things that can be proved real? The principles of morals may be fully appreciated, even by children, while we know the principles of religion cannot be understood, and therefore not appreciated, even by those who are authorised to teach them. The science of morals rests on certainties—religious science is the most uncertain science imaginable, resting, as it does, on mere hypotheses. The truths of morals cannot be gainsayed—while the truths of religion are the cause of disputes at once useless, endless, and foolish. The true religion your lordship would mix-up with state education is as little like the true religion professed by many other members of the Commons' House of Parliament as I am like the late Emperor Napoleon. There are almost as many true religions as there are individuals truly religious—and Dryden very well wrote:

The common cry was e'er religion's test;  
The Turk's is in Constantinople best:  
Idols in India, popery at Rome,  
And our own worship only true at home.  
*And true but for a time; 'tis hard to know  
How long we please it shall continue so;  
This side to-day, and that to-morrow burns;  
So all are God-almighty's in their turns.*

Surely, my lord, these facts should make the people of England pause before they raise their voices on behalf of religious education. They should, above all things, demand of those who desire to religionise their children, a perfect agreement of opinion as to what constitutes true religion—for until the expounders of godly doctrines agree among themselves as to which of the many religious doctrines now taught are really godly, the recipients of such doctrines will always be in danger of receiving false ones, and, consequently, if priests may be believed, in danger of hell-fire. The least to be expected from those who are paid generously by the state for determining and preaching religion, is agreement upon the really vital questions—What constitutes true religion? What is its essence? In what country, what congregations, or in what books is it to be found?

Your lordship knows that as morals concern fact and conduct, not by any means mere speculations about unintelligible dogmas, IT has never caused wars, schisms, or any one of those multitudinous horrors which have everywhere, and at all times, followed in the train of religion. Questions of morality are everywhere discussed with temper, discretion, forbearance, and consequently profit—but discussions on religiousal topics are either prohibited altogether, or carried on in so spiteful, angry, wrangling, and unhappy a temper, that much ill-blood, with very little benefit, usually arises from them. Every one clearly comprehends that he who, unprovoked, knocks his neighbour down, commits a wantonly mischievous, and therefore immoral, act. Such conduct on the part of individuals is almost universally reprobated—but, under the cloak of religion, crimes infinitely worse than that are not only committed with impunity, but lauded to the skies, as acts which reflect much credit upon their perpetrators. Even the assassins Damien, Ravallac, and Clement were extolled as something more than human by pious people, who thought the cause of true religion strengthened by the open murder of heretical monarchs. About the paltry meanness, as well as criminality of theft, of lying, of slandering one's neighbour, of trampling on the fallen, and a crowd of other detestable actions, so commonly performed as hardly to challenge a passing notice, there are, however, scarce two opposing sentiments. The common sense and common feelings of humanity need no drilling into an abhorrence of such actions. No synods of holy men, or grave courts of justice are necessary to determine their iniquity. They are immoralities—and all not thoroughly debased freely allow them to be

so. What is contrary to common good, is in all countries felt to be a common injury—in other words, immorality. There is, therefore, nothing mysterious about morals, nothing fictional, nothing to be taken for granted, or believed, if in itself it seems altogether unbelievable—nothing that well-instructed children could not so teach as to be thoroughly comprehended by children—but religion is quite a different sort of subject. To comprehend it is a task, as little to be achieved by the learned as the ignorant, the old as the young. Philosophers and theologians of all European countries have been writing and talking for more than eighteen hundred years about the christian religion, and yet, at this moment, notwithstanding the time as well as immense erudition expended, what that religion means, what are its essential principles, what the true interpretation of its doctrines, what the amount of service or disservice it has rendered humanity, are questions seemingly just as far from satisfactory settlement as at any former period of its history. I do therefore think, my lord, that the present generation should profit by such bitter yet invaluable experience, and no longer damage their wits, or fool away their time, by discussions about religion, which never will be, as they never have been, productive of anything save intolerable mischiefs. The present generation should determine to know nothing of religion as an affair of state, and if needful, resist to the death any attempt made by existing governments to make men religious by legislative acts, or by an insidious education bill, such as the one now before parliament, to perpetuate religious delusions and religious frauds.

My lord, the time has come when all who love freedom and knowledge, should unite to put down priestcraft—for it is priestcraft that hinders every poor child born in these realms, from being well fed, well clad, and well educated. Until priestcraft is put down, it were vain to look for the establishment in any country of an educational system based on principles of justice and truth. Yes, every kind of priestcraft must be put down or set aside, before the rulers of nations will dare to act on principles of sound education. Who have hitherto thrown inseparable obstacles in the way of every measure calculated to diffuse real knowledge among the people? Who have most effectually resisted every attempted inroad upon ancient abuses made by a succession of British ministries? Who at this very hour are the men who stand between the people and the acquisition of those political privileges for which they are thirsting? Who are the staunch friends of monopoly in every region of the world, while with atrocious mendacity they pretend to be the divinely inspired conservators of poor men's interests, both in this world and that other world *they say* is to come? Need I, for your lordship's information, answer—PRIESTS! They have been the originators, as they are now the prime perpetrators, of all mental delusion, and consequently of all tyrannies, wars, crimes, and miseries, of which delusion is the sole cause. Who but christian priests tried, some half century ago, to prevent the poor people of these lauds learning to read and write? And who but christian priests are now busily employed in attempting to make poor readers and writers only read such books as they thrust into their hands, and only write such phrases as they may dictate to them?

I am not, my lord, so foolish as to blame priests for the terrible evils they have caused and still cause, or at least I am not so absurd as to blame them exclusively. No, my lord, I think that those who suffer themselves to be ridden, are to the full as culpable as those who ride them—in other words, the oppressed share the guilt with their oppressors. Were there no slaves, or people slavishly disposed, there could be no tyrants—and by a parity of reasoning, were there no religionists, there could be no priests. A religious people cannot do without priests—clearly, therefore, the culpability, or rather folly, for that is the true term, is reciprocal—for if priests strengthen and increase popular errors, the people insist upon increasing and strengthening priests.

My lord, there is one kind of medicine that will thoroughly cure the religious disease with which all people of all nations have been cursed. The medicine is very simple, and save by wretched fanatics, who love the state to which that foul disease has brought them, will be swallowed with eager pleasure. That medicine is a pleasant and valuable compound, of which science, common sense, and right reason are the essential ingredients. It is only necessary this most excellent of medicines should be given in very small quantities, a sufficient number of times, to every man, woman, and child in her majesty's dominions, when I

promise your lordship there will be an end to religion in this country, and there can be little doubt that when fairly got rid of anywhere, it will speedily be dispensed with everywhere. Now, my lord, the educational bill promised by Mr. Roebuck, contains medicinal properties extremely like those I have been describing. In plain words, my lord, if the member for Bath should keep his word, and succeed in convincing the House of Commons that education should be strictly and exclusively moral, that in its principles and details it should be purely reasonable, and not at all religious, the inevitable consequence would be a complete and speedy revolution in human ideas—for let our legislature once generally act upon the principle that education should have a moral or matter-of-fact, and not a religious or matter-of-fauey, basis, why priestly influence will be virtually at an end. I hold it impossible that any people taught to reason rightly, to take a common sense view of things, and freely investigate matters properly scientific, can long remain the dupes of those extravagant dogmas, denunciations, and precepts, which, under the imposingly convenient term religion, have so long been received as divine truth, by the most civilised people of the world.

I am, with all due respect,

Your lordship's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

## MORALS.

### III.

Morality has a foundation in the nature of things, has reasons too strong for sophistry to shake, or any future improvement of human understanding to undermine. . . . But there is a common-place language upon subjects of morality, vague and undefined in its meaning, embracing some truth, but full of absurd prejudice, which produces no effect upon the hearer. It has been repeated a thousand times: it has been delivered down from age to age; and instead of being what all morality ought to be, an impressive appeal to the strongest and most unalterable sentiments of the human heart, is the heaviest and most tedious homily that ever insulted human patience.—GODWIN.

As the principles of morality concern human action, such action is necessarily the only source from whence they can be derived. Moral philosophy being nothing more than correct, well digested knowledge of actions most conducive to individual and aggregate happiness, with the reasons why they are so.

As the principles of morals concern human action, and the philosophy of morals is built up of facts which concern actions themselves, no less than the reasons on which just actions are founded, it follows incontestably that no man can be a sound moralist who is either ignorant of human nature, or mistakes its true character—indeed, an intimate knowledge of that nature is indispensable to the practical moralist.

The moralist who mistakes the true character of man, mistakes everything—for it is with man he has to deal—and how should he conclude justly with respect to the actions of a being of whose nature he knows literally nothing, or what is yet worse, he altogether misconceives?

Priests are the worst of all moralists—not because they are altogether ignorant of human nature, but because they have so large an amount of *false knowledge* with respect to it. It has been truly said, that of all men who are familiar with the alphabet, *they* are the worst teachers of mankind.

Dr. Watts, in his "Divine Songs for Children," has thought to aid in moralising them by such lines as these which follow:

*Not more than others I deserve,  
Yet God has given me more;  
For I have food, while others starve,  
And beg from door to door.*

But who, save a *divine*, would hope to make children good by teaching them that God gave them more than their fellow-beings, though they deserved it not—and to congratulate themselves on having food, while others, enduring all the torments of hunger, *begged from door to door*?

Who save priests would expect to *moralise* lisping infants by such tales as that of the rich man and Lazarus? Can the tale about a rich man agonised in the flames of hell, for no other stated crime than having been a rich man, while the sore Lazarus, who is credited with no virtues save those which attach to beggarly lickers-up of crumbs that



fall from rich men's tables, should be carried in the bosom of Abraham to a place of delights—tend to implant in them ideas of justice? Can it moralise children to tell them that the rich man in hell *begged in vain* of Abraham so much water as would cool his scorched tongue? Can it inspire them with sentiments of mercy, to be told that God had fixed a great gulph between the tortured wretch and those who might otherwise have soothed his agonies? If such tales are calculated to make human beings merciful, just, in a word, *moral*, why to priests belongs the credit of furnishing us with an ample store of them. The only redeeming feature in that pernicious fable is the generous anxiety manifested by Dives, lest his friends and kinsmen, *sinning in ignorance*, should, if not warned, be made to endure those unspeakable torments he himself was then suffering. But this is a feature of the horrid picture *seldom* recognised by *adults*, and *never* by *children*, who gain nothing from its contemplation, save false ideas of human character, and a disposition for cruelty.

It seems preposterous to expect that the principles of morality ever can take deep root among a people who not only approve of good actions, and disapprove of such as are bad, which it is reasonable to do, but *praise* and *blame* the actors. There is nothing properly meritorious or demeritorious in the performance of any actions whatever, and though it is the duty of every one to encourage by all available means those who do good, and check by laws or otherwise the "workers of iniquity," it is always unwise to think they could have been other than they are. Undoubtedly all actions opposed to the peace and welfare of society are detestable, but the perpetrators of such actions in any state of society approximating to rationality, though held in abhorrence, would be viewed with an eye of pity. No one would think of torturing a child who, by ignorantly carrying a lighted torch into a powder-magazine, should cause an explosion—not can any individual, not himself mad, be angry with a madman, who, breaking from his place of confinement, knife in hand, should stab a fellow-creature to the heart—but surely because in neither of these cases could we properly *blame*, we should not neglect to take all necessary precautions against the recurrence of such mischiefs.

In all countries where the laws are administered in a *vengeful* spirit, we may be sure the nature of man is not understood—for a right understanding of nature in general, and of that nature in particular, is incompatible with the ideas of merit or demerit, in respect of any kind of living agents. It is as little *philosophic* to *blame* a man for slaughtering his neighbour, as it would be to blame a wolf for devouring sheep—but it is no less proper to hang murderers, when the disposition to murder cannot otherwise be effectually checked, than to shoot wolves with a view to protect our property. *Cruelty*, whether to man or beast, is indefensible—but there is no *cruelty* in any action that the welfare of society calls for the performance of.

All sound morality is based upon a calculation of causes and consequences. The moralist should not so much occupy himself with taking measures for the punishment of criminals as with the withdrawal of those causes which urge men on to crime. Instead of multiplying laws that deal with the committers of desperate deeds, the aim of our rulers should manifestly be to see that no classes of our population are driven by poverty or oppression into desperate courses. But Christians rule us, and how can they be expected to deal with their fellows as "creatures of circumstances," when their religion breathes nothing but a spirit of revenge against those who cannot believe its doctrines, and denounces *eternal torments* upon the heads of all who resist the bigotted tyranny of its priests? Can the *victims* of such a religion, or the *victimisers* who make such a religion their chief instrument of extortion and injustice, be mentally fitted to appreciate those glorious principles of morality which, as they are derived from human experience of itself, demand in those who would comprehend them a patient, truthful, and unprejudiced intellect? Surely not. It seems to me impossible that any sincere believer in the strict truth of gospel history can lay just claim to the character of a moral philosopher. Godwin was of opinion, that :

There is nothing, perhaps, has more contributed to the introduction and perpetrating of bigotry in the world, than the doctrines of the christian religion. It caused the spirit of intolerance to strike a deep root; and it has entailed that spirit upon many who have shaken off the director influence of its tenets. It is the characteristic of this religion, to lay the utmost stress upon faith. Its central doctrine is contained in this short

maxim, "He that believeth, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."\* What it is, the belief of which is saving, the records of our religion have left open to controversy, but the fundamental nature of faith, preserve us from the pains of hell; it is also requisite as a qualification for temporal blessings. When any one applied to Jesus to be cured of any disease, he was first of all questioned respecting the implicitness of his faith, and in Galilee and in other places, Christ wrought not many miracles because of their unbelief.† Never were cures poured out in a more copious stream, or with a more ardent and unsparing zeal, than by the meek and holy Jesus upon those who opposed his pretensions. The short and comprehensive description bestowed upon the refractory to the end of time, appears to be this, they have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

*It is obvious, that a religion whose priests pretend they have a power beyond the grave—a power nothing short of causing to be bound in heaven those they bind on earth, and to be loosened in heaven those they are graciously pleased to loosen on earth—and whose fundamental denunciations are levelled against all who have spirit enough to declare their disbelief of its dogmas, is a religion that must be false in principle and demoralising in effect, because directly opposed to our experience of human nature.*

All religions will be found, upon patient examination, directly hostile to freedom of thought, as they all presuppose the meritoriousness of belief in dogmas thoroughly incomprehensible—and of consequence demerit or criminality on the part of those who dare dispute their truth. Religion, under all its forms, is in *spirit* essentially anti-progressive. It wars with the expression of every opinion save that to which itself has given currency. It scares the tender-conscienced into conformity, by threats of eternal punishments the most terrible that the most vindictively cruel imagination ever conceived. It proclaims belief in mysteries a virtue, and denounces as a vice of deepest dye the enunciation of any truths inimical to such mysterious belief. Priests of every age and clime have "damned to lowest depths of hell" all rejectors of their sometimes sanguinary, sometimes atrocious, and always ridiculous, creeds. They have carefully, as uniformly, associated in the minds of their victims *the ideas of vice and unbelief*, and with such success that even at this hour, in this the most civilised country of civilised Europe, the word infidel or unbeliever is synonymous with vicious man. By this outraging every principle of truth and justice they have contrived to bolster up, through ages more numerous than history records, the "blood-cemented pyramid" of their greatness. But that pyramid is doomed to fall before "the lightning flash of reason," for it is incredible that men should much longer be besotted enough to delay the annihilation of a system which originated in ages of barbarism, and which, true to its origin, is even now the incorruptible ally of all barbarities.

Whenever men in the aggregate shall be convinced there is no merit in belief, or demerit in disbelief, religion's days are numbered, and a new era will dawn upon mankind. Then the principles of morals will be understood, and moral philosophy assume an imposing, as well as definite, shape. Then the commerce of good words and works will have commenced, for men no longer distracted by the senseless speculations concerning other worlds will strive to improve and enjoy this world. Instead of bothering their brains about duties to God, they will learn their duties towards each other. Instead of exterminating wars between nations and individuals about doctrines as unintelligible as worthless, there will be a universal rivalry in the work of doing good. Instead of pampering myriads of priests, who are no otherwise employed than in expounding what neither themselves nor anybody else can understand, they will take measures so to educate their children that they will know how to worship their God, or not worship their God without the interference of sanctified imbeciles, such as those common nuisances calling themselves priests, who swarm over the earth's face, as Moses tells us locusts did over the land of Egypt, and, like those destructively disgusting insects, "eat up every green thing."

Godwin says truly, "it is the characteristic of the christian religion to lay the utmost stress upon faith"—and it should be equally the characteristic of philosophers to lay the utmost stress upon reason—for reason alone can make men moral and keep them so—reason alone can emancipate them from the thralldom of unnaturalism—reason alone can fully open their eyes to the fact that they and their forefathers have been most

\* Mark xiv. 16.

† Matthew viii. 13; ix. 23, 29; xiii. 68; Mark v. 36; ix. 23; xi. 23, 24; John xi. 40; xx. 29.

shamefully abused by priests of every denomination—yes, reason is the all sufficient, as it is the only, antidote to the moral poison generated by faith.

Now, to destroy the notion that we deserve *praise* if we believe orthodoxly, and *blame* if our conclusions are heterodox, is literally to tear up priestcraft by its roots. To prove man a necessary agent, is practically to disprove the leading dogma of all religions, and at the same time firmly fix the very corner-stone of sound moral philosophy. I cannot therefore better employ myself, at this stage of our investigation, than in considering the doctrine of FREE WILL. If the free will doctrine is untenable, there is no escape from the conclusion that moral philosophy, as hitherto taught, is untenable, seeing that it proceeds upon the supposition that men are free to think what they please, independently of evidence added, or general circumstances in which they may be placed. I am not ignorant that *some* moral philosophers, as Sir Charles Morgan, are necessitarians, and of course reject the free will notion; but it is quite clear that all educations, in which religion is commingled, proceed upon the opposite principle; and as I believe there is very little education given to the people at large of which religion forms no part, to expose a fallacy so pregnant with mischief will be immensely useful.

The holders of free-will doctrine may, methinks, be very well confounded if not answered, by reference to a story told of Buridan, a philosopher of the fourteenth century, and a professor in the University of Paris, who made use of a most notable example to demonstrate the absurdity of those free-willers who assert a power in man of determining himself either to the right or to the left, at the same time when the motives are exactly equal from the two opposite objects—and sagely assure us that our soul can say, without having any other reason to make use of its liberty, *I love this better than that, though I see nothing more worthy of my choice in this than in that.*

Buridan used an ass to illustrate the folly of *free-willers*, and certainly a beast more *apropos* he could not have selected. Whereupon a witty modern author has remarked, that:

There was reason enough to laugh and break jests upon the supposition of such an ass, and a field for subtilising the cavils of dialectics according to the mode of those times. It is no wonder that Buridan's ass became famous in the schools. Buridan's ass might be a sophism which that philosopher proposed as a kind of dilemma, that whatever answer were given him, he might draw some puzzling conclusions from it.

I will now come at once to this amusing "sophism." Buridan supposed either an ass much famished, between two measures of oats, of an equal force, or an ass, as much puffed with thirst and hunger, between a measure of oats and a pail of water, which equally acted upon his organs. Having made this supposition he asked, *What shall this ass do?* If anybody answered, He must remain immovable; then concluded he, *He must die of hunger, between two measures of oats—he must die of thirst and hunger, within reach of meat and drink.* This was a thorough poser to such answers—but if any body took it into his wise head to say, "The ass has more sense than to die of hunger and thirst in such a situation, then our curious supposition had him at once upon the hip, for if the ass so circumstanced must turn to the one side, rather than the other, though nothing moves him more strongly towards that place than towards this, then he is endowed with a free will, or, which is all one, it may happen that of two weights poised in equilibrio, one moves and raises the other." This most aptly ludicrous example of free will absurdities, is worth more than many score pages of dry reasoning, in refutation of that chimerical doctrine. It is clear that if a man were placed in a like situation, as the supposed one in which the ass was placed—he too, would inevitably be famished, while most delicious morsels were spread out on either side of him—or positively die of thirst, while the means of quenching it seemed to be entirely at his disposal. Our incapacity to place either an individual ass or an individual man in so unfortunate a situation, is of course no proof they could not be so placed.

Every one allows there must be a will to act, before there can be voluntary action—and however such will may be made up is of no moment to the present question—for even the will compelled is yet the will, as Aristotle long ago observed. Now, will has been defined by Hartley as "the state of mind which immediately precedes an action." Granting this definition to be sufficiently accurate, it must appear that the real, or rather only, point in dispute between *free-willers*

and *necessitarians* is, whether man can by some inherent and independent quality of his nature—*will to will* at pleasure—and not as others have erroneously thought, whether he has power to do what he wills. The power to do what we wish to do is often possessed by all—but the power to will at will is not possessed by any.

Here I dismiss this free-will question, but only for the present—as it is intrinsically of far too much importance, and at the same time too completely interwoven with what may be called the texture of moral philosophy, to justify a hasty or partial consideration of its merits.

## THE COMPARATIVE RATIONALITY OF THEISM AND ATHEISM.

### III.

THE names of Newton and Clarke are held in great esteem by all who are familiar with the history of mechanical and metaphysical philosophy. As a man of science, there is no individual, ancient or modern, who would not suffer by comparison with Sir Isaac Newton—while common consent has assigned to Dr. Samuel Clarke the first place among metaphysicians. As a logician he was unrivalled, being, beyond all question, the ablest of that very large class of reasoners whose productions are *logically* true but *morally* false. It has been said of Newton, that if all known mechanical discoveries were divided into ten parts, nine of those parts resulted from his prolific brain—an assertion somewhat hyperbolic perhaps, but it is past dispute that Newton did more for mechanical philosophy than any half-dozen of his predecessors. Of Dr. Clarke, it may also be observed, that he was the friend of Newton, and the defender of his philosophical system against many subtle opponents, the chief of whom was Leibnitz. Upon the whole, it would be difficult methinks, if not impossible, to mention any other theists of better approved reputation than Newton and Clarke—therefore have I introduced them to the reader's notice in this place, for as they ranked among the most philosophic of theists, it might be expected that their conceptions of Deity would be clear, satisfactory, and definite. Now, let us see, in their own writings, what those conceptions were.

Newton conceived God to be *one*, the same for ever, and everywhere—not only by his virtue alone, or by his energy, but also by his substance.

Pause, reader, and demand of yourself whether such a conception of something unnatural is either clear, satisfactory, or definite. God is *one*—well, but one what? From the expression "he is the same for ever and everywhere," I cannot but conclude that Newton thought him a Being. Here, however, matter bars my way—for the idea of Being is, in me, inseparably associated with the idea of substance. When I am told God is a Being without parts, consequently unsubstantial, I try to think of such a Being, but find all attempts to do so are vain. Reason puts itself in a quandary, the moment it labours to realise an idea of absolute nothingness. Yet, marvellous to relate, Newton did distinctly declare his God to be "totally destitute of body," consequently of corporeal figure—and positively urged that *fact* as a reason why he (God) cannot be either seen, touched, or understood, and, also, as a reason why he ought not to be adored under any corporeal figure.

The same great philosopher taught, that God governs all, not as the soul of the world, but as the lord and sovereign of all things; that it is in consequence of his sovereignty he is called the Lord God, ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ, PANTOKRATOR, the universal emperor—that the world God is relative, and relates itself with *slaves*—and that the Deity is the dominion or the sovereignty of God, not over his own body, as those think who look upon God as the soul of the world, but over *slaves*—from all which slavish reasoning, a plain man who had not been informed it was concocted by Europe's pet philosopher, would infallibly conclude some unfortunate lunatic had given birth to it. That there is no creature now tenanting Bedlam who would or could scribble purer nonsense about God than this of Newton's, I am well convinced—for how could the most frenzied of brains imagine anything more repugnant to every principle of good sense, than a self-existent, eternal, omni-



potent, omnipresent Being, creator of all the worlds, who acts the part of "universal emperor," and play, upon an infinitely large scale, the same sort of game, Nicholas of Russia, or Mohammed of Egypt play upon a small scale. There cannot be slavery where there is no tyranny, and to say, as Newton did, that we stand in the same relation to a universal God, as a slave does to his earthly master, is practically to accense such God, at reason's bar, of tyranny. If the word God is relative, and relates itself with slaves, it inconceivably follows that all human beings are slaves, and Deity is by such reasoners degraded into the character of universal slave-driver. Really theologians and others who declare so bitterly against blasphemers, and take such very stringent measures to punish infidels, who speak or write of their God, should seriously consider whether the worst, that is, the least religious of infidel writers, ever penned a paragraph so disparaging to the character of that God they affect to adore, as the last quoted paragraph of Newton's. If even it could be demonstrated that there is an inhuman Being, it cannot be proper to clothe him in the noblest human attributes—and still less can it be justifiable in pigmies, such as we are, to invest him with odious attributes belonging only to despots ruling over slaves. Besides, how can we imagine a God who is "totally destitute of body and of corporeal figure," to have any kind of attributes? Earthly emperors we know to be substantial and common-place sort of beings enough, but it is not sheer abuse of reason to argue as though the character of God is at all analogous to theirs, or rather, is it not a most shocking abuse of our reasoning faculties to employ them at all about a Being whose existence, if it really have an existence, is perfectly enigmatical, and allowed to be perfectly enigmatical, by those very men who pretend to explain its character and attributes? I find no less a sage than Newton explicitly declaring as incontestible truth, that God exists necessarily—that the same necessity obliges him to exist always and everywhere—that he is all eyes, all ears, all brains, all arms, all feeling, all intelligence, all action—that he exists in a mode by no means human, by no means corporeal, and yet this same sage, in the self-same paragraph, acknowledges God is *totally unknown to us*.

Now, I should like to be informed by what *reasonable* right Newton could pen a long string of "incontestible truths," such as are here selected from his writings, with respect to a Being of whom, by his own confession, he has not a particle of knowledge. Surely it is not the part of a wise man to write about that which is "totally unknown" to him, and yet that is precisely what Newton did, when he wrote about God.

There is, however, one remark of his respecting the God he thought necessarily existed, worthy of notice, which is, that "human beings revere and adore God on account of his (supposed) sovereignty, and worship him like his slaves;" for to *all* worshippers, the practice as well as principle of worship does appear pre-eminentlv slavish. Indeed, I have always found myself unable to disassociate the idea of worshipping beings or things of which no one has the most remote conception, from the idea of genuine hypocrisy. To love God and do him homage, I am quite aware are reckoned by christians among their highest duties. But, nevertheless, it seems to me impossible that any one can love an existence or creature of which he never had any experience. Love is a feeling generated in the human breast, by certain objects that strike the sense—and in no other conceivable way can love be generated. But God, according to Newton, is neither an *object* nor a *subject*, and though, all eyes, all ears, all brains, all arms, all feeling, all intelligence, and all action, he is *totally unknown to us*. If christians allow this to be a true description of the God they worship, I wish to understand how they can love him so vehemently as they affect to do—or how they can pay any other than *lip* homage to so mysterious a Deity? It is usual for slaves to feign an affection for their masters that they do not, cannot feel—but that believers in a God should imagine that he who "searcheth all hearts," can be ignorant of what is passing in theirs, or make the tremendous mistake of supposing that their *lip* homage, or interested expressions of love, are not properly appreciated by the Most High God, and universal emperor, is indeed very strange. To overreach or deceive a God who created the heavens and the earth, is altogether beyond the power of puny mortals. Let not therefore those who bend the knee, while the heart is unbent, and raise the voice of thankful devotion, while all within is frost and bar-

renness, fancy they have stolen a march upon their God; for surely *if* the lord liveth, he judgeth rightly of these things. But it were vain to expect that those who think God is related to his creatures as a despot is related to his slaves, will hope to please that God by aught save paltry cringing, and dishonestly despicable practices. Yet, no other than a despotic God has the great Newton taught us to adore—no other than mere slaves of such a God, has he taught us to deem ourselves. So much for the theism of Europe's chief philosopher. Turn we now to the theism of Dr. Samuel Clarke.

He wrote a book about the being and attributes of God, in which he endeavoured to establish, first, that "something has existed from all eternity;" second, that "there has existed from eternity some one unchangeable and independent Being;" third, that "such unchangeable and independent Being, which has existed from all eternity, without any external cause of its existence, must be necessarily existent;" fourth, that "what is the substance or essence of that Being, which is necessarily existing, or self-existent, we have no idea—neither is it possible for us to comprehend it;" fifth, that "the self-existent Being must of necessity be eternal as well as infinite and omnipresent;" sixth, that "he must be one, and as he is the self-existent and original cause of all things, must be intelligent;" seventh, that "God is not a necessary agent, but a Being endowed with liberty and choice;" eighth, that "God is infinite in power, infinite in wisdom, and, as he is supreme cause of all things, must of necessity be a Being infinitely just, truthful, and good—thus comprising within himself all such moral perfections as becomes the supreme governor and judge of the world."

These are the leading dogmas contained in Clarke's book—and as they are deemed invincible by a respectable, though not very numerous, section of theists, I will briefly examine the more important of them.

The dogma that *something has existed from all eternity*, is perfectly intelligible, and may defy contradiction—but the real difficulty is to satisfactorily determine *what that something is*. Matter exists; and as no one can even imagine its non-existence or annihilation, the materialist infers that must be the eternal something. Newton as well as Clarke thought the everlasting Being is destitute of body, and consequently without parts, figure, motion, divisibility, or any other such properties as we find in matter—*ergo*, they did not believe matter to be the eternal something; but if not matter, what can it be? Of bodilessness or incorporeity, no one even among those who say their God is incorporeal, pretend to have an idea. Abady insisted that *the question is not what incorporeity is, but whether it be?* Well, I have no objection to parties taking that position, because there is nothing more easy than to dislodge those who think fit to do so—for this reason: the advocates of nothing, or incorporeity, can no more establish by arguments drawn from unquestioned facts, that incorporeity is than they can clearly show *what it is*. It has always struck me as remarkable that men should so obstinately refuse to admit the possibility of matter's necessary existence, while they readily embrace, not only as possible, but certainly, true, the paradoxical proposition that a something, having nothing in common with anything, is necessarily existent. Matter is everywhere around and about us. We ourselves are matter—all our ideas are derived from matter—and yet such is the singularly perverse character of human intellect that, while resolutely denying the possibility of matter's eternity, an immense majority of our race embrace the incredible proposition that matter was created in time by a necessarily existing Being, who is without form, figure, passions, or positive nature!!!

The second dogma informs us that this always-existing Being is unchangeable and independent. One unavoidable inference from which is that Deity is itself immovable, as well as unconnected with the universe—for a moveable Being must be a changeable Being, by the very fact of its motion; while an independent Being must be motiveless, as it is evident all motives result from our relationship to things external; but an independent Being can have no relations, and consequently must act without motives. Now, as no human action can be imagined without necessary precursors in the shape of motives, reasoning from analogy, it seems impossible that the unchangeable and independent Being, Clarke was so sure must ever have existed could have created the universe, seeing he could have had no *motive* or *inducement* to create it.

The third dogma may be rated a truism—it being evidently

true that a thing or Being, which has existed from eternity without any external cause of its existence, must be self-existent; but of course that dogma leaves the disputed question, namely, whether matter, or something *not* matter, is self-existent, just where it found it.

The fourth dogma is not at all questioned by atheists, as they are quite convinced that it is not possible for us to comprehend the substance or essence of an immaterial Being.

The other dogmas I need not enlarge upon, as they are little more than repetitions or expansions of the preceding ones. Indeed, much of the foregoing would be superfluous, were it not that it serves to illustrate, so completely and clearly, theistical absurdities. The only dogma worth overturning, of the eight here noticed, is the *first*, for if that fall, the rest must fall with it. If, for example, the reader is convinced that it is more probable matter is mutable as regards form, but eternal as regards essence, than that it was willed into existence by a Being said to be eternal and immutable, he at once becomes an atheist—for if matter always was, no Being could have been before it, nor can any exist after it. It is because men in general are shocked at the idea of matter without beginning and without end, that they so readily embrace the idea of a God, forgetting that if the idea of eternal matter shock our sense of the *probable*, the idea of an eternal Being who existed *before* matter, *if well considered*, is sufficient to shock all sense of the *possible*.

The man who is contented with the universe, who stops at *that*, has at least the satisfaction of dealing with something tangible—but he who don't find the universe large enough for him to expatiate in, and whirls his brains into a belief that there is a necessarily existing something beyond the limits of a world *unlimited*, is in a mental condition no reasonable man need envy.

Of the universe, or at least so much of it as my senses have been operated upon by, I have conceptions clear, vivid, and distinct; but when Dr. Clarke tells me of an intelligent Being, not *part* but *creator* of that universe, I can form no clear, vivid, distinct, or, in point of fact, *any* conception of such a Being. When he explains that it is infinite and omnipresent, like poor Paddy's famed ale, the explanation "thickens as it clears;" for being myself *finite*, and necessarily present on one small spot of our very small planet, the words *infinite* and *omnipresent* do not suggest to me either positive or practical ideas—of course, therefore, I have neither positive nor practical ideas of an infinite and omnipresent Being.

I can as easily understand that the universe ever did exist, as I now understand that it does exist—but I cannot conceive its absence for the millionth part of an instant—and really it puzzles me to conceive what those people can be dreaming about who talk as familiarly about the extinction of a universe as the chemist does of extinguishing the flame of his spirit-lamp. Why even the stoics, who thought there would come a general conflagration, had no more notion of matter's annihilation than I have at this moment. It is indeed a fearful objection to theism, that until men can reason themselves out of their almost instinctive conviction that it is impossible matter can ever be annihilated, there is no chance of their reasoning themselves into the belief of its fundamental dogma.

Before closing this article it may be useful to note that whereas Newton contended God exists *NECESSARILY*, and that the same necessity *OBLIGES* him to exist always and everywhere, Clarke as positively contended that God is not a *NECESSARY* agent, but a Being endowed with *LIBERTY* and *CHOICE*!

## ATHEISM AND THE LATE MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

SOME friends of the late Richard Carlile have protested against its being published to the world that he was not a thorough-going atheist, as in their opinions he was so, and they seem much annoyed that I should think fit to express a contrary opinion. Now, that Richard Carlile was a theist is not placed by me in the long list of my *opinions*, but among my collection of *facts*. It is to me evident that no one who has studied, so as to understand, Mr. Carlile's writings, could make the mistake of concluding that he was an atheist. I am aware that he published himself "atheistical in religion," but that fact only

warrants the inference that he *thought* himself an atheist, and not by any means that he really was so.

There is another fact not generally known, which is, that though Richard Carlile many times declared himself atheistical, he never intentionally put in print, "I, Richard Carlile, am an atheist." Here a short statement of certain circumstances is necessary to enable the reader to understand what I mean by *intentionally* putting such a declaration in print.

In a volume of the "Republican," published while he was in gaol, a paper was sent by him for insertion in its columns containing a statement that he, Richard Carlile, was an atheist *conditionally*. Then followed a string of conditions which I have not seen, but which, as he himself informed me, went to soften and qualify the harsh offensiveness of so staggering an avowal; but the gentleman who at that time proofed and prepared his writings for the press, cut away the conditions, and left him, in type, an *unconditionally* declared atheist.

The reader will please to remember that I had a relation of this circumstance *not* six months ago from the lips of Mr. Carlile; nor is any breach of confidence involved in my here relating it, as Mr. Carlile neither himself made a secret of it, nor wished me to do so—indeed, during the conversation that then took place he much censured me for so nakedly avowing myself an atheist in the "Oracle of Reason," likening such a procedure on my part to a man who should raise a wall in order to dash his own brains out against it.

But I suppose it is not of so much consequence to any parties whether he did or did not avow himself atheist, as whether he really was one. If he really *had* done so, it would only have been doing what had been done before, aye, and with impunity too. It is a fact not generally known, and therefore worth mentioning here, that a proclamation was issued by Mr. William Hammon, of Liverpool, in the eighteenth century, containing these words: "Whereas, some have doubted whether there ever was such a thing as a proper atheist; to put that out of all manner of doubt, I do declare that, upon my honour, I am one. Be it therefore remembered, that in Liverpool, in the kingdom of England, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one, a man hath publicly declared himself an atheist."

This is explicit enough in all conscience, and the fact that not only was the proclamation tolerated, but its author allowed to escape with impunity is rather startling—almost enough to make one sceptical as to the progress of liberal ideas during the last sixty years. It may be that Mr. Hammon and his proclamation were dealt with by the law, but I have not hitherto been able to discover any evidence that they were so. But to return.

In an "Essay on the Idea of Power," printed in No. 5 of the INVESTIGATOR, I stated that "it is very unjust to charge either Robert Owen, Richard Carlile, or the North American savages with atheism. . . . for they all alike allow power to be supreme and universal. . . . they all alike allow too that it moves the atom and controls the aggregate of nature."

In proof that this is no libel on Richard Carlile, I quoted from No. 7 of his "Prompter," the following decisive words, "I question the propriety of associating moral attributes with that physical power called God, which we all alike allow to be supreme and universal."

Now this statement of mine with regard to Mr. Carlile's non-atheism, amply justified as it is by the above quoted passage, even though not another passage of similar import could be found in all his writings, seems to have given, as before remarked, some of his friends considerable annoyance—but the friends, or rather the *worshippers*, of public men, would much consult their own ease if less sensitive and fidgety about what concerns the opinions or character of their idols. Really man-worship has grown to such a height, that to write a line save in a strain most fulsome about eminent individuals, is work no less inglorious and quite as unpleasant as storming an American anti-hill. Talk of bridging a hornets' nest about one's ears! that is mere sport in comparison of drawing upon one's unlucky cranium the mob of sectarians who are ever ready to fight tooth and nail, like wild women or wild cats, when their "duck of a reformer" is so much as glanced at. This species of idolatrous frenzy should be discouraged by all sensible persons who desire to remove the chief obstacles in the way of moral and political improvement. For myself, I am determined to print and speak what I think ought to be printed and spoken, without regard to the clamorous violence of god-worshippers on the one hand, or man-worshippers on the other.

Alfred DeTanner.  
Bentley's Life.  
Vol. 1, p. 104.  
J. G. Jones, A. S.



If Richard Carlie was a theist, what possible harm can there be in stating the fact? So far from thinking harm will result from such a course, I am persuaded it will originate much good. A great error now extensively prevails as to the existence of something besides matter, that something is called power, and we have seen Richard Carlie considered it "supreme and universal." Not content with announcing so much, he went farther, and declared that ALL allowed HIS imaginary power to be "supreme and universal"—whereas, atheists lay down as an axiom fundamental to all correct reasoning, that "there is matter and nothing else." Plainly therefore, atheists reject the notion of *power*, for power is something distinct from matter, or it is nothing. If it is nothing, nothing should be said about it—if distinct from matter, it cannot be universal, because matter takes up some room at all events, and from the space, however small, it occupies, all else must be excluded. As to the *supremacy* of power, we cannot possibly know there is in nature anything *supreme* until we are first assured that the idea of a material universe is compatible with the notion of something above or below, supreme or inferior to itself.

It was remarked by Mr. Carlie, in page 473 of the "Prompter," that

In all questions relating to the abstract principle of Deity, we have to consider whether we are treating of the power or principle, or of the *personification* of that power or principle; and the attributes by which it is shaped to the human understanding, or clothed according to human fashion.

There is nothing clear, nothing definite about all this. An abstract principle is just an abstract principle, neither more nor less. The idea of principles, abstract or practical, are suggested to us by the workings of our own and all other bodies. A *principle* has not length, breadth, thickness, or shape, as body hath. Who would think of weighing *principle* in scales of brass or iron, as grocers weigh their sugars and figs? It is not philosophy, it is *madness*, to write about a *principle* as though it were a *thing*, for by so doing we misuse the very elements of all just thought, and confound what ought never to have been confounded, namely, IDEALITIES with REALITIES.

The only writings of Mr. Carlie I have now within reach are those contained in his volume of weekly publications, stretching from November 13, 1830, to November 12, 1831, before referred to, called the Prompter, and "A Discourse on the Subject of Deity, delivered in the Church of Mount Brinksey, near Stockport," so far back as 1837; but in these two are contained ample evidence that their author was not an atheist, by which term I mean an individual who rejects the God-idea under all its forms, from a conviction that matter being self-existent, could not have had either an external or an internal cause of its existence; that matter does all that is, or has been, or can be done, of necessity, and of course without either intrinsic or extrinsic aid—or, in other words, that there is neither POWER, nor, PRINCIPLE, nor THING, nor BEING, ENABLING matter to combine, separate, ferment, putrify, crystalise, grow, diminish, or display any other phenomena, seeing that by its own energy it produces, *sans cesse*, these results.

Matter in one state forms a crystal, in another a blade of corn, in a third a human creature, in a fourth a monkey, and in other states other forms. The essence of a crystal or the essence of a monkey, in other words, those native energies of their several forms, constituting and keeping them what they are, can no more be understood than can the essentiality of *human* nature. But the atheist, because he finds it impossible to explain why matter exhibits such vast and various energies as it is seen to exhibit, is no whit the less assured it naturally, and therefore necessarily, acts thus energetically. No atheist pretends to understand why bread nourishes his frame, but of the fact that it does nourish him he is well assured. He understands not why or how two material beings should by conjunction give vitality to a third material being, more or less analogous to themselves—but the *fact* stares him in the face.

There is one mistake that seems fundamental to all mistakes with respect to this question. Men have concluded, without any admitted facts, justifying such conclusion, that matter could not of itself perform what we every hour see it perform. Herein consists the most fatal of all mistakes; for having, in the first place, befooled themselves into the belief that they were ALL-KNOWING with respect to the extent

of matter's capacity, and, in the second place, having in perfect harmony with this prime blunder announced as unquestionable truth that matter could neither be self-existent, nor the effector of all effects, why men naturally desirous to account for everything, employed their busy brains in the hard, but barren, work of imagining "an external or an internal cause for all existences," and afterwards, a very fit sort of companion for this remarkable cause, namely, an "external or an internal power"—not matter, of course, because the sole and very important business assigned to it by these imaginers was to push, drive, keep in order, or throw into disorder, "atoms and aggregates." Now it is undeniable that the late Richard Carlie believed such a power to exist. Sometimes he called it a "principle"—but what we call the imaginary regulator of our universe is of little importance. Like the crowd of meaner men, he was afflicted with the rage of *accounting* for every phenomena by reference to an agency distinct from matter. Godwin justly observed, in one of his early Essays:

There is an insanity among philosophers that has brought philosophy itself into discredit. There is nothing in which this insanity more evidently displays itself, than in the rage of accounting for everything.

Nature well known, no prodigies remain:  
Comets are regular, and Wharton plain.

Now with this kind of insanity atheists are not afflicted. They may be very insane on other points, but with respect to this particular of *accounting* for everything they are sanity itself. Richard Carlie suffered from this mischievous species of moral hydrophobia. He had been most likely, when in his cradle, bitten by some mad theological dog, and never got thoroughly over its effects. His madness was kept within tolerably strict bounds, but madness it was nevertheless.

The friends of Mr. Carlie are at perfect liberty to dispute the validity of these statements if they please, and so far am I from being disposed to throw any obstruction in the way of their taking such a course, that I will most cheerfully throw open the columns of this paper for any counter statement they may feel disposed to publish. But it is not unlikely that what I am about to advance will set the question of Mr. Carlie's atheism at rest for ever.

In No. 14 of the Prompter may be seen a series of paragraphs headed "Robert Owen's Creed." Now one of these paragraphs contains the following words:

"I BELIEVE THAT ALL FACTS PROVE THAT THERE IS AN EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL CAUSE FOR ALL EXISTENCE, BUT BY THE FACT OF THEIR EXISTENCE; BUT THAT MAN HAS NOT YET ACQUIRED A KNOWLEDGE OF ANY FACTS TO ASCERTAIN WHAT THAT CAUSE IS, OR ANY OF ITS ESSENTIAL QUALITIES."

Now, I beg those readers who desire to get at the truth to carefully remember that atheists do not allow "all facts prove" there is an external or an internal cause for all existence," though Robert Owen does. Atheists do not allow that "all existence" could by possibility have had a cause; and the fact of its existence proves to them just the fact of its existence, and nothing else.

The quoted paragraph proves that Robert Owen is not an atheist, and now we shall see that the selfsame paragraph proves, indirectly, to be sure, but *clearly*, that Richard Carlie was not an atheist; for in the same Prompter containing the creed of which this paragraph forms a part, may be found the "Creed of Richard Carlie," and it is really remarkable that the very first passage of the creed completely identifies the religious opinions of Robert Owen and Richard Carlie. The passage is as follows:

"I BELIEVE THAT ROBERT OWEN IS USEFULLY RIGHT IN HIS VIEW AND STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION OF RELIGION—AND USEFULLY RIGHT ON THAT SUBJECT ONLY."

Here is a case made out against those who insist that Richard Carlie was a *bona-fide* and not a *pseudo* atheist. No atheist in the world can possibly think Robert Owen "usefully right in his view and statement of the question of religion." They are quite satisfied, on the contrary, that he is mischievously wrong, both in his views and statements relative to religion.

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"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

LETTER VII.

A FEW of christianity's difficulties have been submitted for your grace's consideration. Preceding letters have made manifest that there is a difficulty if we interpret the first chapters of *Genesis literally*—there is an equal difficulty if we *allegorise* those chapters—there is a difficulty inseparable from an attempt to conceive a universal beginning—there is a difficulty in the conception that the universe never had a beginning—and last, though not least, of these *few* difficulties, there is the God-difficulty, which I take to be the greatest of all.

Here then are five difficulties calling for the exercise of your grace's ingenuity and talent. They stop the investigator who would reason himself into the belief of christianity's truth upon the very threshold of his investigations; and such is their force, that I am convinced no christian, however laborious, learned, or acute, can overcome them in five centuries.

But methinks I hear your grace say: "It is not reason, it is faith, and faith alone will enable any individual to receive with all humility the bottom truths of christianity. Cease, then, vain man! to imagine that the mere reasoner can ever understand divine mysteries, or that truth, as it is in Jesus, will ever become the prize of any save those who seek it prayerfully, in the undoubting spirit of faith."

Such is, perhaps, the sort of language your grace would use, if induced to bestow a notice on these letters. I don't know anything else bearing even the show of argument you *could* say. Indeed it is the only plausible looking face that can be put upon the matter. There is no novelty about this mode of dealing with reasoners who cannot be beaten by reasonings—but, as Lord Melbourne once remarked of a good, yet much hacknied illustration, used by Lord Brougham, "it is none the worse for that."

There is, to be sure, much respectable authority for the free use of reason upon religious questions—but then there is at least equal authority against its use, or, at all events, against trusting to reason as a safe guide. It is certain that theologians, when battling for religion, have this considerable advantage—they can reject reason and laud faith when reason does not exactly harmonise with their doctrines—while faith may be put upon the shelf when reason best illustrates them.

Some very able divines have loudly praised investigators "of little faith"—in other words, individuals who doubted the truth of doctrines they failed to comprehend. Even that bright christian luminary, Dr. Marsh, bishop of Peterborough, declared: "if investigation bred scepticism, it was so much the better; for if a thing is false, it ought not to be received; if a thing is true, it can never lose in the end by inquiry; on the contrary, the conviction of that man who has perceived difficulties and overcome them, is always stronger than the mere persuasion of him who never heard of their existence."

This is truth, but not orthodox truth—by which, I mean, not church-of-Englandism truth. There is scarce half-a-dozen preachers of that church over which your grace rules who do not most industriously and perseveringly preach up faith, and preach down reason. They may be wrong in declaiming so bitterly against reason, while upon many fitting occasions they take such pains to demonstrate the reasonableness of their religion—but that is your grace's, not my business, all I know, or care about, is the *fact* that they do so declaim.

Nor is this practice of lowering reason to exalt faith confined to pulpit haraungers. Oh, no; priests are not alone or unaided, in their attempts to stultify human intellect. Some of the best written lay books declare war against the free exercise of reason. I have now before me volume xxi. of the "Penny Cyclopaedia," published by the well-known Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge; in page 20 of which, article "Sceptic," are the following words:

When considering the great and awful subjects of religion and philosophy, the weakness of the human mind must ever keep it in this state of scepticism, when once it has renounced its faith in things higher than its own logic; when once reason is set up as the standard measure and exponent of all things, the human being is lost in the shoreless sea of scepticism. Hence mathematicians and logicians have so often been sceptics when they have acknowledged no higher source of knowledge than their small "discourse of reason looking before and after." History affords many a saddening spectacle

Of poor humanity's afflicted logic,  
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.

This is surely strange jargon to appear with the sanction of a useful knowledge society. It breathes the genuine spirit of priestcraft, and is, moreover, most exorbitantly foolish. Priests have always loved to dwell upon "the weakness of the human mind," as it would seem, for no other purpose than to perpetuate that weakness. The weakness of aggregate intellect has, in all ages, been their strength. Of that fact they have never been ignorant—and therefore have they dreaded those bold-spirited men who "renounced all faith in things higher than their own logic." Such men well knew that faith in things inaccessible to reason means just this: blind confidence in creatures called priests, things not with human but inhuman pretensions, who are mystery-mongers by profession, and naturally dread the setting-up of reason as "the standard measure and exponent of all things." But let us see what this word *faith* really means—let us see if it be not itself only a peculiar, and to cheats, a very convenient kind of reason—for if it can be established that faith, notwithstanding the fuss priests make about it, is only a cowardly exercise of the reasoning faculty, even your grace will be convinced, not merely of the folly, but the utter impossibility of setting up any other "standard measure and exponent of things," than reason.

Feeling is living. An individual without the capacity of feeling is virtually dead. To feel without thinking is impossible, as thought is a consequence of sensations experienced, or rather, thought is only a series of sensations. The propensities and intellectual faculties, as well as moral feelings of each individual, are evidently nothing more than the variously modified and always modifying sensations experienced by such individual. Individual reason is the short expression for the sum total of individual sensations, as the aggregate



gate of human reason is the aggregate of human sensations. As to feel is to live, so to think is to reason—it being as impossible to reason without thinking, or to think without reasoning, as it would be to feel without living, or live without feeling. According to these views, there is no such thing as faith unfounded upon reason. This must appear true to any one who takes the trouble to consider that *our reason must be convinced of faith's efficacy before faith itself can come into play.* A man, for example, must be convinced—in other phrases, his reason must be satisfied it is good to have faith in God, or Jesus Christ, before he can be really faithful. I presume Saint Peter agreed with this doctrine, seeing that he earnestly recommended his brother christians to be prepared with a *reason for the faith that was in them.* Nor does Paul's definition of faith as “the substance of things to be hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,” at all weaken my argument—nay, it strengthens it exceedingly, as we cannot hope when we see no reason for hoping—nor can we, without the exercise of reason, collect or judge of any evidence whatever.

Your grace knows there are millions of beings who have faith in the bible. They believe it a production of inspired penmen—but is it not clear that they would cease to believe it anything of the sort if they thought its contents unreasonable? The christian and Jew think it reasonable to believe anything written in that book, however unreasonable such writing may seem in itself considered, and therefore they do believe it. The Turk has faith in the koran, the Hindoo in his shaster, and all other men of all other nations, in some one or more similarly inspired books, upon precisely the same principle. Is it not monstrously absurd to suppose an individual could have full faith in the divine truth of unintelligible propositions, without a *prior* conviction that such faith is justified by reason? Yes, your grace, let writers for the useful knowledge society scribble what they please, I tell you, without hesitation, that it is not only *wise* to set up reason as “the standard measure of all things,” but that, in point of fact, *it is the only standard measure and exponent of all things which can be set up.*

I have already reminded your grace of Bishop Marsh's sound opinions touching investigation—but if, as you and other christians would seem to suppose, faith is a mental peculiarity, distinct from reason, why his opinions are not of the slightest value. He tells us that if a proposition is false, it ought not to be received. He lays this down as a rule without exception, at all events he excepts no propositions—but can your grace explain in what manner we can know a proposition to be false if we do not bring reason to bear upon it? If a thing is true, exclaims the bishop, it can never lose in the end by inquiry; but your grace will be puzzled to explain in what manner we can prove a thing true if we do not test it by reason. According to my Lord Verulam, faith begins where philosophy ends; which is just the truth for which I am contending. The strongest faith is usually grafted on the weakest reason—for faith is that almost universal disposition in human beings to believe true the most incredible propositions, and, paradoxical as it may appear, to do so upon the principle that sometimes belief in the unreasonable is justified by reason itself. Indeed, I am persuaded it is only necessary your grace should probe this matter to arrive at the conviction that all conclusions of the understanding are derived from the reasoning principle, though all conclusions are not rational, and that no man embraces a faith without first satisfying his reason that such faith is reasonable. Where is the christian who will admit that his faith is repugnant to reason? or where the believer in a God who thinks such belief irrational? To furnish a valid and sufficient reason for the faith that is in them, constitutes the peculiar happiness of most christian people—or at least, they boast that it does.

The Penny Cyclopaedia writer, your grace will perceive, sneers at those mathematicians and logicians who have admitted “no higher source of knowledge than their small discourse of reason looking before and after;” but I have so much of *faith* in the foregoing remarks as to suppose they will convince your grace that all reason is knowledge, and all knowledge is reason—and as to “higher sources” of knowledge, I cannot conceive of more than one source of knowledge, which is nature itself. A high source implies the existence of a low source—but in nature there is neither high nor low anything, and therefore such terms, when used in relation to it, are quite unphilosophical.

I do not think it worth while to trouble your grace with any further observations on such arrant nonsense as is here

exposed. It is sufficient for my argument to establish as a certain fact, that human reason is the standard by which the truth and value of all opinions are measured, and that the wildest beliefs are deemed quite rational by those who hold them. If that disposition to believe true, dogmas glaringly false, called *faith*, were shown to be derived, not from reason, but from some higher and independent principle of our nature, there might be more sense in writing about higher sources of knowledge than reason can explore—but when the principles of faith are in every case reasoned upon before embraced, in every case supposed reasonable before adopted, is it not rank insanity to be bothering about some *imaginary* moral guide superior to reason?

Your grace, there is no such moral guide. There is nothing human thought can occupy itself with, superior to reason. Reason includes all aggregate as well as individual mental phenomena. Every sensation we experience from the time we issue from the womb, till the capacity of feeling is extinct has its share of influence in the production as well as modification of reason. To perceive, compare, reflect, and conclude is to reason—the soundness or weakness of an individual's reasonings being contingent upon his capacity to perceive clearly, compare truly, reflect profoundly, and conclude sagely. Children reason almost as soon as born. The child who knows the difference between his sucking bottle and his rattle, and remembers that wormwood is not so pleasant as sugar, must have reasoned to a considerable extent—he must, in other words, have perceived, compared, reflected, and concluded.

Your grace is doubtless far from falling in with the vulgar opinion about *madmen* being deprived of their reason. The maddest of men necessarily reasons from the instant he awakes to the moment he is recomposed to sleep. They act injuriously because they reason falsely, and therefore are they confined in lunatic establishments—but false reasoning is still reasoning. It is from some defects in their perceptive or reflective faculties, that they are unfit for the companionship of others, and it often becomes necessary to lay them under severe restraints. Now, your grace, it is evident that before a man can have faith in any set of doctrines, he must exercise his faculties of perception, comparison, reflection, and judging upon them. The short is, *he must reason.* It is altogether absurd to suppose any one can receive this or that dogma as true, without first feeling satisfied it is proper to receive it. But the idea of propriety is not perhaps the same in any two individuals—and in all individuals it is determined by the reasoning faculty. *Faculty* is only another term, I may remind your grace, for *facility*. One man rhymes with facility, another writes with facility, a third lies with facility; of the first we say, he has the faculty of rhyming, of the second he has the faculty of writing, of the third he has the faculty of lying—and the same might be said of the innumerable other faculties for various crafts, which are so many faculties, or capacities of doing, exhibited by brute as well as human creatures.

One individual's reasoning faculty is so weak, that he can scarce at all discriminate between falsehood the most glaring and truths the most obvious. He will as readily believe, if told to do so by those he has been accustomed to deem wise, that Jonah swallowed the whale, as that the whale swallowed Jonah. Upon a pinch, he would have faith enough to credit that the fish and Jonah swallowed each other. Such an individual, of course, could not be accounted a man of “little faith,” whatever might be thought as to the strength of his reason.

Your grace may smile at the idea of so ultra a specimen of faith, as is here supposed, but my experience warrants me in concluding that where, as in this country, men's reason is systematically perverted by false education, there are scarce any lengths to which they will not go in the exercise of faith. All christians, of course, believe Balaam's ass spoke—they believe that “the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people (Jews) had avenged themselves upon their enemies”—they believe that Samson, with the jaw-bone of an ass, killed a thousand Philistines—they believe that Elijah was carried up into heaven by a whirlwind—they believe that Elisha found no difficulty in making heavy iron swim in light water—and they would believe, if your grace and other priests were to tell them the *fact*, that “once upon a time,” the sun and moon went to loggets for the edification of their christian ancestors.

This disposition to believe the incredible, whether instinc-

tive, as some think, or grafted on human nature, as I think, is the prime support of religion. What would become of the christian religion, if only such of its dogmas and tales were believed as harmonised with experience? Voltaire was of opinion that many christians could easily be made to believe "the rainbow a fiddlestick of the fiddle of heaven"—an opinion that your grace, who knows the christian character so well, will not, I fancy, call in question. In truth, such christians are the safest, as they are the best—for if they happen to stumble upon a truth hostile to their creed, no harm comes of it. Such stumbling may shake them greatly, but never shake them out of their religion or their religion out of them. Aristotle taught that "doubt is the beginning of wisdom"—but people with strong faith and weak reason, are of a widely different opinion—they *know* by favour of divine grace, that doubt is the commencement of folly. So hard are they upon doubters of the irreligious tribe, that they will not even promise them a chance of immortal blessedness. I have read of reverend christians who lauded doubt as very desirable, the Rev. C. C. Colton to wit, who called doubt "the vestibule which all must pass before they can enter into the temple of wisdom"—but your grace's experience must teach you that such sceptically inclined reverends are few and far between. No, no, orthodox christian clergymen do not often praise those who breathe anything doubtful about the religions they are so extravagantly paid to teach. Instead of agreeing with Aristotle, that "doubt is the beginning of wisdom," they are quite sure that it is the end of it. Lord Bacon esteemed doubting no less highly than Aristotle. He said, "doubt is the school of truth"—but then neither Aristotle nor Bacon were priests, they had neither enormous fortunes nor enormous influence contingent upon always keeping the "rabble" to one opinion or of one opinion. A priest in heart as well as name, must be a foe to doubt and a friend to faith, for if all men turned doubters, the craft by which priests live would be upset—whereas, strong faith strongly resists all new doctrine and new practice. It is just because doubt is the vestibule which all men must pass before they can enter into the temple of wisdom that priests won't lend a hand to build it, or, if they can help it, allow others to do so. The temple of folly is the only temple they have reared—its vestibule is faith, through which for centuries have countless millions of dupes contentedly passed.

Surely the pleasure is as great  
In being cheated as to cheat.

So, your grace, I have often been told, and really experience, that it is said "maketh even fools wise," is fast drawing me to believe the pleasure of being cheated is very great indeed, if not so great as that of cheating—for upon what other principle can we account for the amazing pains men take to be thoroughly gulled. How determined they seem not to let an opportunity slip of being fleeced. If their rulers do not enact laws for the purpose of plundering them, how speedily they become laws unto themselves in that particular, or rather make laws among themselves which render it imperative that some few of the whole numbers should grow rich and powerful by humbugging all the rest. Emerson, an eminent American writer, recommends that all people refuse to believe a pop-gun is not a pop-gun, though all the great ones of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom—but such advice, your grace, as an archbishop, cannot countenance. It is contrary to the spirit of christianity, and if generally acted upon, would annihilate its substance. Only to believe what has an air of probability, only to accept as divine truth propositions that will bear the test of severest reasonings, would be treason against your grace's holy religion, and would in a very short period as effectually destroy the temples raised to its honour, as though they were swallowed up by an earthquake. As a philosopher, Mr. Emerson might properly enough give such advice, but as a mere religionist, he ought not to do so. The best religionists your grace will readily allow, are those who have a mountain-removing faith—a faith that never falters—a faith like the famous Tertullian's, who, in his "Spectaculis," tells us he was not ashamed of maintaining that the son of God was born, *because it is itself a shameful thing*—who thought it wholly credible that the son of God died, *because it is monstrously absurd*—who maintains that the story about Christ's rising again, after having been buried, is absolutely true, *because it is manifestly impossible!*

Is it not plain to your grace, that if all christians had as

much faith in the "shameful," the "monstrously absurd," and the "manifestly impossible," as Tertullian appears to have had, that the church would never be scandalised by doubts and heresies, or its priests have their slumbers disturbed by visions of popular enfranchisements based upon a popular intelligence, freed from all connection with religion. But this is an age of investigation. An immense majority of British population is either sceptical or sceptically inclined. The time is rapidly coming when *all* men will be ashamed of *all* faiths not justified by reason. They cannot much longer be hindered from knowing that faith is simply a disposition to receive as true what appears false, from a conviction it is reasonable to do so—and that well-cultivated reason is the only solid foundation on which to build up the happiness of nations.

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

## SPECULATIONS ON MAN.

The proper study of mankind is man.—POPE.

### III.

MAN has been variously defined. Some have distinguished him as the *two-handed animal*. Plato pronounced him *an animal without feathers*; but certainly, with all due respect to the definitions of Plato, and others, the most satisfactory definition of man was lately given by a writer in the "Weekly Dispatch," who distinguished him as the *cooking and superstitious animal*. Neither the definition of Plato, of Anaxagoras, or other worthies less ancient, come up to this, for it is the application of fire to culinary purposes, and the abuse of his reasoning faculties, more especially in relation to the *unnatural*, that have jointly contributed to distinguish man, as well advantageously as disadvantageously, from *brute* creatures. Helvetius was persuaded that if the human animal had been naturally *hoofed*, like a horse, instead of *handed*, as he is, he would never have reached the civilisation of monkeys—and without doubt man owes much to his hands. Ancient sages were so sensible of the important part played by the hand in all human affairs that they styled it "the instrument of instruments."

But small use to man would have been hands, had not the rest of his structure borne so peculiar a relationship to "things extern" as forced him to gather from experience the use of fire. Monkeys have never been known in their wild state to avail themselves in any manner of that subtle agent's assistance. It is true, they are frugiferous, whereas man is omnivorous. They subsist on fruits which need no fire to make them palatable, while men, who are found in all climes, and in some of them, doubtless, need the stimuli that flesh best furnishes, being, in fact, as already remarked, omnivorous, or all-devouring—accident combined with the necessities of their nature must early have taught them the important action of fire on food, and hence the cooking art. To speak of man, therefore, in contradistinction to all other creatures, as a cooking animal, is, I conceive, quite philosophic. It is no reflection on monkeys to say they are so organised as to be perfectly content with fruit nourishment, but it is evident that such contentment was no ordinary obstacle to their improvement. A multitude of wants suggest a multitude of means for supplying them. If men had been frugiferous, they would have been as effectually barred from running a course of civilisation as though, instead of hands, they had had hoofs attached to their wrists. In the few barbarous countries where men can easily obtain an abundant supply of tolerable food, they are uniformly found to spend their time in eating, drinking, and sleeping. The well-led barbarian is always slothful—man not being, as some have imagined, naturally industrious, but naturally idle—which fact suggested to Hume the important reflection that if an all-powerful Being framed this world, he might have greatly improved the condition of its two-handed inhabitants by implanting in them a disposition to industry, instead of that indolent spirit so strikingly manifested by all uncivilised people.

But many wants which good men on to the practice of various arts, infallibly breed many vices—and it is because



monkeys are so organised as to need less than us that they are stained with fewer vices than we are. Monkeys are most numerous within the torrid zone, where the trees are loaded with delicious fruits. Their food is provided for them; whereas, man, except in the most favoured region he inhabits, is compelled to provide his own, which he can sometimes scarce do in sufficient quantity, by toil incessant and severe. If, then, the monkey is less knowing than man, he is far less unhappy—if he is a stranger to luxuries, he never lacks necessities—if he is ignorant of civilisation's pleasures, he is a stranger to its barbarities—in brief, if the positive happiness enjoyed, and virtues practised, by monkeys will by no means bear comparison with those enjoyed and practised by human beings, their negative virtues and negative happiness is infinitely greater.

At least nine-tenths of human miseries flow from human errors. It is not men's ignorance, it is their spurious knowledge makes them always the most inconsistent, and often the most unhappy, of animals. Unquestionably it is better men should be wise than foolish, but who would hesitate to choose between the condition of those who know nothing and those who only know what is false. Monkey tribes do not build cities, cultivate the arts, or print books—but then they do not, as men have done, and still do, drench the earth with each other's gore. They are not civilised enough to march out with all "the pomp and circumstance of glorious war" to butcher their fellow-creatures. No, war:

The statesman's game, the priest's delight,  
And the hired assassin's trade,

is not carried on by monkeys, or any other brutes, against brutes of "their own clime, complexion, and degree." Monkeys do not usually assassinate monkeys—nay, there is scarce a wolf so unnaturally fierce as to destroy a wolf—but hitherto man's chief delight seems to have been to destroy man. The lion, the tiger, and the hyena, are compelled by "a wise providence" to fight for subsistence. They are made cruel by all the agonies attendant upon raging hunger, but man slaughters man for mere pastime. He goes about "seeking whom he may devour," merely to gratify an atrocious disposition for deeds of blood and cruelty. Boileau wrote:

The most foolish of all animals, in my opinion, is man.

But a charge of being supremely foolish is not the only or the heaviest charge that may justly be brought against man. It is undeniable that the human animal is the most unhuman, as well as foolish, of all animals. The earth which would, through countless ages past, have been a magnificent garden of delights, not a thorny wilderness, had man been less vicious, has ever been one scene of strife, desolation, and misery. Let those who so loudly boast the dignity and rationality of human nature read the history of that nature. Let him peruse the heart-sickening details of brutal lusts and bloody deeds. Let him read of the savage Joshua, who sacked whole cities, smote all the souls that were therein—destroying them so "utterly" that none were left to breathe. Read of Saul, who butchered his thousands, and of David, the man "after God's own heart," who killed his tens of thousands; and, if the murderous tales that adorn the pages of *sacred* books are not sufficient to convince the sceptical how brutal human nature was, they are referred to the doings of Cæsar, Charles XII., Napoleon, and other "murderous coxcombs."

There is no other animal, save the human, that seems to take pleasure in the agonies of others. Man has greatly distinguished himself as the tormentor of all living things that fall within the sphere of his accursed influence. The deer sports innocently on our lawns—the ox grazes harmlessly on our fields—even tigers and hyenas, well fed, seem contented to do no mischief. But the best-fed human animal is often the most mischievous. He unceasingly makes war upon his own, as well as all other species, notwithstanding the *nobility of his reason*.

Saint Foix, who exposed the brutality of stag-hunting, pathetically, as truly, observes: "The stag is mild and peaceable; he does not lie in ambush in the depths of a forest to commit crimes. The more we view him, the more we admire his elegant shape, and the nobleness of his mein. Without disparaging man, he is a *finer creature than he, and has none of his wickedness*."

I have before me some strangely horrible details of mon-

sters in human shape, that will well serve to illustrate the foregoing remarks.

There was Wenceslaus, the German emperor, who, according to Mezeray, Voltaire, and other authors, actually roasted his cook alive, for dressing his dinner amiss, and never had so intimate a friend in Prague as the common executioner—but even him he put to death, at last, for not taking him at his word when he once had bid him cut his head off, and actually knelt down to receive the stroke.

Philip Galeas, as Visconti, Duke of Milan, is reported to have been a man of a nature so timid that thunder threw him into convulsions—yet was he so inhuman that he could enjoy the shrieks of females stretched upon the rack.

It is related of the pious christian Coccinas, that at the terrible massacre of Paris he bought a considerable number of Huguenots, that he might torture them to death for his private satisfaction. Coccinas was nevertheless accounted a good catholic.

The notorious Baron D'Adrets, who was held in much esteem by the Huguenot or protestant party, as Coccinas was by the catholic party, is called by D'Aubigne, "*inventeur des tous cruautes, qui bouffonoit en les executant*" (an inventor of all kinds of cruelty, who used to play the buffoon whilst he was executing them), for by way of *amusing* some of his fair countrywomen, French ladies that he had with him at supper, he threw headlong from the walls of his castle, into the river Soane, the catholic prisoners that were at his disposal. Allard, in his life of that human brute, tells us that so violent was his fury, that after making great carnage, he obliged his two sons to bathe themselves in blood, that they might be familiarised with cruelty. Yet, strange to say, by way of *finale* to his religious doings, he returned into the bosom of the catholic church.

Phillip II. of Spain, ranks among the most monstrous of monsters. He confessed to having sacrificed *twenty millions of men* to his lust of dominion, and to have laid more countries waste than all those he possessed in Europe. This royal brute (but I beg brutes' pardon, no such cruelties being chargeable upon them) who has been fitly styled "devil of the south," *demon meridionalis*, many times declared he would rather lose all his dominions, than be the sovereign of a single heretic. It has been figuratively said of him, that "he floated in a lake of blood the Romish church"—and yet his piety was never doubted. He was a thorough-going christian, and of course, most devout worshipper of an omnipotent and merciful god—notwithstanding which moralising belief, he never was so perfectly happy as when feasting his eyes with beholding the expiring agonies of the inquisition's victims. He publicly avowed that if an executioner should be needed, he would not scruple to perform the office himself. But he was excessively liberal to monks and concubines—nor would he upon any account tread upon tombs, because over the epitaph there is sometimes a cross. It is, besides, worth mentioning of his "most christian majesty," that he "died calmly at the age of seventy-four," and that two days before his death he saw, in a vision, the heavens open, which together with fourteen doses of supreme unction, gave him great satisfaction.

During the wars of the Albigenes, Simon, Earl of Montfort, was remarkable for his cruelty to heretics. In the city of Castres, two were condemned to the flames, and when one of them declared he would abjure his heresy, the cross-bearers (monks) were divided in opinion—some contended that he ought not to be put to death, others said it was plain he had been an heretic, and that his abjuration was not sincere, but proceeded only from the fear of death. Earl Montfort, it appears, settled this business by desiring that he should be burnt, *logically* concluding that "if his conversion was real, the fire would expiate his sins—if otherwise, he would receive a just reward of his perfidiously."

These are samples of the shocking cruelties inflicted by men upon man. There is surely nothing in the history of brutes to match this. Where are the tribes of apes that burn and slaughter each other? In monkey history there is no mention made of such abominations. But monkeys do not scratch and worry each other about doctrinal points. They are not religious animals. Of one or more Gods they seem not to have the slightest idea. Consequently, monkeys have no priests among them to "teach the incomprehensible," devour their substance, and set their brains a wool-gathering. Monkeys are so far lucky. If they had been cursed with an inch or two more of brain in the wrong place, they would probably have had just sense enough to be religious, when of

course they would have been far from so amiable towards each other as we commonly find them. Monkeys would have been speedily divided into orthodox and heterodox. Some would have believed in one God, others been quite sure there must be three, at least—others, again, would fight to their chins in blood in proof that there are to a certainty, at least three millions of Gods. The cleverest monkeys, if writing was in vogue among them, would write books, and presently palm them upon the rest as inspired productions. In order more easily to get the cheat credited, the cheaters, like our Minos, Numa Pompilius, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Mahomet, and others, might do the mysterious in caves or hollow trees, for a year or two, as by so doing, the other monkeys would be impressed with salutary awe, and be prepared to receive as gospel any religious tales the mysterious monkeys may have had inclination to concoct. What a sight to behold would be that of some score or two of *monkey-monks*, aided by all other monkeys who thought they had "souls to be saved," performing an auto-da-fe upon the bodies of atheistical monkeys who thought they had not "souls to be saved." An auto-da-fe, the reader doubtless knows very well, is an act of faith exemplified by certain christians in broiling, baking, or roasting heretics. Now I do think that if monkeys had immortal souls, or thought they had, and were as convinced, as some christians seem to be, that there is a father, son, and holy-ghost, three persons in one God, in a word, if they were religious, they would inevitably have become as cruel, and fiercely intolerant as human religiousists. I cannot but conclude, therefore, they are, in common with all the inferior animals, negatively benefited by their utter ignorance of the incomprehensible. Heretics were first burned in England during the reign of Henry the fourth, just to please the bishops. They assisted him to dethrone Richard the second, and as a mark of his pious gratitude, he gave them full liberty to boil, broil, bake, or roast the heretics. Now, who can suppose that if monkeys had been rational enough to have a religion, they would have been irrational enough not to make bishops of some monkeys, archbishops, cardinals, and popes of others. With these worthies they would have been blessed by racks, thumbserews, blazing faggots, and other inquisitorial apparatus. Most seriously do I declare, therefore, as my ripe and steady conviction, that though monkeys cannot cook, which is certainly to be deplored, still they are never poisoned by foul diet—and if they are irreligious, they at least have the satisfaction of chattering in their way, without dread of being burned in this world and damned in the next for chattering heterodoxy.

## WITCHES AND WITCHERY.

THOSE who accept the bible as "a record from heaven," must believe that there are, or at least have been, witches. According to Exodus, the Jews were commanded by God, "not to suffer a witch to live;" the inference, therefore, is unavoidable, that there were witches "in those days." But though the "sacred record" furnishes such satisfactory evidence as to the reality of witches, it leaves us in a state of disagreeable ignorance as to what constitutes a witch. I learn from profane authors that *witch* is derived from the Dutch *witchelen*, which signifies whinnying and neighing like a horse, in a secondary sense also, to fortel and prophecy—because the Germans, as Tacitus writes, used to divine and fortel things to come by the whinnying and neighing of their horses. His very words are *hinnu* and *fremu*.

That witches deal in the unnatural, and have to do with unnatural gentry, is evident from the accounts so many grave christians have published respecting them. As Lewis, for example, who tells us in the thirty-eighth edition of his "Explanation of the Catechism," page 16, that what is meant by renouncing him (meaning the devil) is renouncing all familiarity and contracts with the devil, whereof witches and conjurers, and such as resort to him, are guilty.

From this "explanation" it appears that witches are persons who enter into close alliance, vulgarly "row in the same boat," with the devil—but then, the mischief of it is, that who the devil is no one seems perfectly to understand. The term *devil* is very much in vogue, and ought to mean something, but what it means I cannot precisely say. Divines inform us that the devil is the author of all evil, as God is the

author of all good. Indeed, if they may be credited, God and the Devil have been at loggerheads ever since the world was created. The former is, in our churches and chapels, and other "holy places," worshipped as "*Most High*," while the latter is most vehemently and contemptuously abused.

I have ever thought it "pitiful" that when God revealed himself to man, as priests assure us he did, that the devil's character was not fairly exposed, seeing such fair exposition would have put us on our guard against his machinations. As, however, Otway *knew* :

'Tis thus that heaven its empire does maintain;  
It may afflict, but man must not complain,

I suppose the less said against or about "divine economy" the better. Not to complain is orthodox and quite safe, while to breathe a sentence against "providenceism" is heterodox and very dangerous. Cicero had the hardihood to say that the lasting good fortune of Harpalus, a successful pirate, bore testimony against the Gods; and Seneca, when speaking of Sylla, says, "*Deorum crimen Sylla tam felix*," that is, the Gods were *criminal* in allowing Sylla to be so fortunate. But pagans were not so jealous of their Gods' honour as christians are of theirs. Were any one to declare in this "free country" that the lasting good fortune of certain noted villains, bore testimony against the Jews' God; or that such God is criminal in swelling the fortunes of modern Syllas, why it is probable he would not escape with impunity. If, therefore, we think the divines' devil a mischievous sort of personage, that no good God would willingly have created, or, having created, willingly suffered to mar the face of nature by the seduction of its first inhabitants—we shall do the prudent by keeping such thoughts to ourselves.

That there is a devil all sound christians believe; that God called him into being for the wisest of purposes, they are thoroughly convinced, and that there are witches few of them deny. The faith in witches is not so strong or so pure as it used to be, I grant—not is the devil so often spoken of as a real personage. Belief in witches is almost extinct in our large towns, but belief in a devil still holds sway in "the court, the camp, the grove"—as well among the educated inhabitants of cities, as among the most boorish of our peasantry. Many ages have not elapsed since disbelief in witchery drew upon the disbeliever a charge of atheism. The learned Sir Thomas Brown says, in his "*Religio Medici*," p. 901, "For my own part I have ever believed, and do now *know* there are witches; they that doubt of these, do not only deny them but spirits; and are obliquely, and upon consequence, a sort, not of infidels, but atheists." Nor was this author altogether without excuse for charging with atheism those who refused to believe in witches—for, not to dwell upon the divine command to exterminate witches, already quoted, I am of opinion that the same facts which go to demonstrate the unreasonableness of belief in witches, tell with equal force against belief in any unnatural Beings or agencies. Those who deny the existence of witches might with equal reason deny the existence of God, as both beliefs rest upon similar foundations.

Admit a God, all other mysteries cease,

so do religionists tell me, and I believe them. No believer in a God can consistently refuse to believe in devils or witches, on the ground of such belief being unreasonable, seeing that they boast their knowledge of God, not by reason, but through the exercise of faith. Lord Bacon discovered, or pretended to have discovered, "the true unction" whereby witchcraft is practised. He tells us, "The ointment that witches use is made of the fat of children, digged out of their graves—of the juices of smallage, wolf-bane, and cinque foil, mingled with the meal of fine wheat—but I suppose (continues he) that the saporiferous medicines are likeliest to do it, which are henbane, hemlock, mandrake, moonshade, tobacco, opium, saffron, poplar leaves, &c." Now all this is quite consistent in a philosopher who tells us in a "Confession of Faith," printed during his life time, that "Nothing is without beginning but God—no nature, no matter, no spirit, but one only and the same God. That God, as he is eternally almighty, only wise, only good in his nature, he is eternally father, son, and spirit in persons!" The man who could pen this might well be expected to believe in the reality of witchcraft. Indeed, I do not know how any individual who thinks the bible "God's word," can presume to be sceptical as to the existence of witches. The decay of such belief in our own



time, is evidence, clear and decisive, that as knowledge increases, the influence of scriptural tales will surely diminish. In Bacon's time, witches and witchcraft flourished amazingly. In a sermon preached before Queen Elizabeth, in 1558, Bishop Jewel said, "It may please your grace to understand that witches and sorcerers, within these last four years, are marvellously increased within your grace's realm. Your subjects pine away even unto death, their colour fadeth, their flesh roteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft—I pray God, they never practise further than upon the subject." How excessively charitable towards the poor! who alone we are told can inherit the "kingdom of heaven." Their future reward would of course recompense them for all the pains and penalties, the trials and difficulties of "this wicked world"—it would be too much of a good thing for the "swinish multitude" to have comfort and happiness here, and happiness and comfort for all eternity hereafter. How like a hypocritical mitred rogue, looking out for preferment, was such a *prayer* for the queen, before whom he was preaching! Would not the holy oil used at the coronation preserve the Lord's anointed? Now it is likely that if one of our bishops, say Harry of Exeter, were to sermonise in such fashion to Queen Victoria, if she did not rate him an ass, the people would.

John Bell, formerly minister of the gospel at Glaidmir, taught as unquestionable verity, that there are two criterions wherewith to discover the true unction by which witchcraft is effected. Providentially (said he) two appeared to discover the crime, mala fama is one, and an infallible criterion—if the witch cries out, "Lord have mercy upon me," when apprehended. The other was, the inability of shedding tears—because as a witch could only shed three tears, and those with her left eye, her stock was quickly exhausted—and that was the more striking, as that regal foe to witches, King James the first shrewdly observes, "Since women in general are like the crocodile, ready to weep upon every slight occasion."

It was believed for many years that witches might be proved such by their weight. In a work called the "Manual of the Literature of Criminal Law," by Professor Bohmer, of Gottingen, we have a succinct account of witches being executed by the ordeal of fire, after being half executed by the ordeal of water. But what is more surprising than all, is the proof given that they were witches, by their being weighed in scales—when a tall and robust woman weighed no more than three drams, and her husband, who was not of the smallest, only five drams, and the rest on an average only half an ounce, three drams, and even less.

King James the first wrote some books to demonstrate the truth about witches, as it is in Exodus. Reginald Scott's "Treatise on Witchcraft," was intended to open the world's eye to this pernicious and stupid credulity—but the royal *spooney's* effusions were held as gospel, while Scott's really valuable work was scarce noticed at all. King James has been nicknamed Solomon of the west, and it is worthy of note, that whereas his namesake of the east, Solomon the wise, packed up all the devils, witches, brownies, &c., he could scrape together in a brass chest, and shipped them off to Babylon—James's books on "Demonology" seemed to have the effect of attracting those curious characters to this country—for no sooner were the books in print, than the land literally swarmed with devils and their protégés.

The following title is prefixed to a quarto pamphlet, printed in London, in 1621—"The wonderful discovery of one Elisabeth Sawyer, late of Edmouton, her conviction, condemnation, and death—together with the relation of the devil's access to her, and their conferences together—written by Henry Goodcote, minister of the word of God, and her continual visitor in the gaol of Newgate."\*

Defoe relates, in his "History of the Devil," that the famous mother Lakeland, who was burnt for a witch at Ipswich, in the year 1646, confessed, at the time of her execution, or a little before it, that she had frequent conversation with the devil himself—that she, being very poor, and withal of a devilish, passionate, cruel, and revengeful disposition before, used to wish she had it in her power to do such and such mischievous things to some that she hated, and that the devil himself, who, it seems, knew her temper, came to her one night as she lay in her bed, and was between sleeping and waking, and speaking in a deep hollow voice, told her

"If she would serve him in some things he employed her to do, she should have her will of all enemies, and should want for nothing"—that she was much afraid at first, but he solicited her very often, bade her not be afraid of him, and still urged her to yield, and as she said, struck his claw into her hand—and though it did not hurt her, made it bleed, and with the blood wrote the covenant, that is to say, the bargain between them. Being asked what was in it, and whether he required her to curse or deny God, or Christ? She said, No. Then he furnished her with three devils (to wait upon her, I presume, for she confessed they were to be employed in her service). They attended in the shape of two little dogs and a mole. The first she bewitched was her husband, by which he lay a great while in misery and then died. Then she sent to one Captain Beal, and burnt a new ship of his, just built, which had never been to sea. These and many other horrid things she did, or thought she did, and confessed, and was then burnt.

To so absurd a pitch was credulity carried, that one Matthew Hopkins was appointed *witch finder* for four counties, and brought to the fatal tree in one year no less than sixty reputed witches in Essex alone. This fellow pretended to be a critic in the certain marks betokening a witch, as moles, warts, spots, or wens, affirming they were tests to suckle imps. His favourite ordeal was by water—if the witches floated and swam, they were guilty, brought out and burnt; if they sunk or were innocent, then they were only drowned. Perhaps this ordeal arose from his most sacred majesty King James's wise saying, "As some persons had renounced their baptism by water, so the water refuses to receive them in return." At length Hopkins became suspected as a wizard himself, and it was proved upon him in his own way, for the fellow had the impudence to swim, and, *ergo*, being guilty, was executed. There were more than Hopkins who carried on a "roaring trade" in witch-finding—nor will this surprise any one who knows that for every witch found a reward of 20s. was given. Dr. Grey, editor of Hudibras, tells us that between three and four thousand persons had suffered death for the imputed crime of witchcraft, from 1613 to the restoration of Charles the second.

On July 29, 1699, fifty-two witches were in the prisons of Scotland, some of whom gave what was then considered conclusive proof of their witchery, namely, by owning themselves guilty.

Mrs. Hicks and her daughters, *aged nine years*, were hanged at Huntingdon, for "selling their souls to the devil, tormenting their neighbours, by making them vomit pins, for raising a storm, so that a ship was almost lost, by pulling off their stockings and making a lather of soap."

How witches were generally dealt with the reader has seen—but sometimes they were racked, and otherwise most inhumanly tortured. Del Rio was a great advocate of the rack, "in moderation," and according to the regulations of Pope Pius the third, and so as not to cripple the prisoner for life. That same lump of christian flesh strongly recommended that the accused should be kept without sleep for a week or ten days together. He considered that, which is, perhaps, the most horrible of all torments, as excellently adapted to women, and others of delicate habits.

As a specimen of witch trials may be mentioned the case of Mrs. Mary Anne Turner, who was tried in 1615, as an accomplice in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. Sir Lawrence Hyde, the queen's attorney, charged her "with going to Dr. Forman, and by his skill in magic, to procure the Earl of Somerset to love the Countess of Essex, and Sir Arthur Manwaring to love Mrs. Turner." Several pictures and enchanting papers were produced in court, and it so happened, that just at that moment the scaffold in the hall gave a great crack, and put the audience to the rout, they imagining the devil was coming among them. In some of the parchments produced were the names of the particular devils who were conjured to torment the Lord Somerset and Sir A. Manwaring, if their loves should not continue to those two ladies. Mrs. Turner also confessed she had practised many sorceries upon the Earl of Essex's person. At length, the chief-justice, Lord Coke, charged the jury, and told the prisoner that she had the seven deadly sins, namely, wrath, bawd, sorcerer, witch, papist, felon, and murderer, and exhorted her to pray to God to cast all those devils from her.

By way of contrast to this most contemptible conduct of Chief-Justice Coke, I will cite a similar case tried before Sir

\* A notice of this pamphlet may be seen in Canfields Memoirs, 1, 70.  
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\* This anecdote may be found in Noble's Continuation of Grainger, page 163.

John Powell, then judge. A woman was charged as a notorious witch. Her accusers swore that she could fly; when the judge addressed her: "Prisoner, can you fly?" "Yes, my lord," she replied. "Well, then," replied he, "you may, there is no law against flying." She thus lost her character, but secured her life; for that truly-enlightened and noble judge would not convict her even by confession.\*

Another of our chief-justices, Sir Matthew Hale, who is the great law oracle in this country, was no less ferociously bigotted and stupidly credulous than Sir Edward Coke. So thorough an imbecile had religion made him, that in 1664, he tried, and caused to be cruelly executed—murdered is the proper term—two miserable wretches, for the alleged crime of witchcraft. This was the first-ass who first discovered that "Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land," or at least, he was the author of that silly sentence, so often quoted as infallible wisdom, by the judges of our own times, when they want a decent pretext for crushing those who have no very high respect for the law of the land, and no respect at all for Christianity.

The least bigotted of our lord chief-justices, was Holt—for though he did so far bend to the accursed spirit of his age as to condemn many who were charged before him as witches, it is quite clear from the records of those trials at which he presided, that he would fain have been rid of the odious task. One case in which he was concerned exhibits his character in so advantageous a light, and, at the same time, so well illustrates the insanity of religionised human nature, that I here insert it.

According to Noble's "Biographical History," a poor decrepit creature was brought before him as a sinner of great magnitude. "What is her crime?" "Witchcraft." "How is it proved?" "She uses a spell." "Let me see it." "A scrap of parchment was handed to him. "How came you by this?" "A young gentleman, my lord, gave it me to cure my daughter's ague." "Did it cure her?" "Oh yes, my lord, and many others." "I am glad of it. Gentlemen of the jury, when I was young and thoughtless, and out of money, I and some companions, as unthinking as myself, went to this woman's house, then a public one; we had no money to pay the reckoning. I hit upon a stratagem to get off scot-free. On seeing her daughter ill, I pretended I had a spell to cure her; I wrote the classic line you see—so that, if any one is punishable, it is me, not the poor woman, the prisoner." She was at once acquitted by the jury, and rewarded by her judge.

The act for punishing witches was permitted to blur our statute-book till the year 1736!! It would appear that some saving-clauses still remained up to the 23rd of March, 1821, for not till then was the witchcraft repeal bill finally read!

The North American Indians have their mystery-men, alias paw-waws, or wizards, who use strange gestures, distortions, horrid smokes, burnings, and scents, and several such things, which the sorcerers in ancient times are said to have used in casting nativities, in philters, and in determining, or as they pretended, directing the fate of persons, by burning such and such herbs and roots, as hellebore, wormwood, storax, devil's wort, mandrake, nightshade, and abundance more such, which are called noxious plants—also, melting such minerals, gums, and poisonous things, and by several hellish mutterings and markings over them. The like do these paw-waws. Cotton Mather, a grave and religious writer, attributed the increase of witches in New England to the paw-waws sending their spirits amongst them—but the paw-waws not relishing it, retorted the accusation. Nineteen persons were hanged, and one pressed to death, for being mute—in fact, there were one hundred and fifty more committed for trial on this same charge of witchcraft, and two hundred more were accused. The Rev. Mr. Noyes, who presided at the slaughter of three men and five women, who had been judged guilty of trading with Satan said to the assembled crowd, with perfect Christian indifference, as soon as the convulsive agonies of the three wretched victims had ceased: "What a sad thing it is to see eight fire-brands of hell hanging there."

What do these facts prove, if not the awfully demoralising influence of unnaturalism? In the new, its effects have been the same as in the old, world. The course of true religion (as it is called by its votaries) has been marked with every kind of cruelty and extravagance. There is nothing so base, nothing so foolish, nothing so outrageously cruel, it has not, under one or other of its multitudinous forms, given birth to and perpetuated.

UNBELIEVER'S CREED, UNBELIEVER'S CREED,

*According to Christians.\**

*According to Atheists.*

I BELIEVE that there is no God, but that matter is God and God is matter, and that it is no matter whether there is any God or no.

I believe that the world was not made, that the world made itself, that it had no beginning, that it will last for ever, world without end.

I believe that man is a beast, that the soul is the body, and the body the soul, and that after death there is neither soul nor body.

I believe that there is no religion, that natural religion is the only religion, and that all religion is unnatural.

I believe not in Moses—I believe not in the First Philosophy—I believe in Chubb, Collins, Toland, Tindal, Morgan, Mandeville, Hobbes, Shaftesbury—I believe in Lord Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Diderot, Bonlangier, Volney, and Paine—I believe not in St. Paul.

I believe not revelation—I believe in tradition—I believe in the Talmud—I believe in the Koran—I believe not in the Bible. I believe in Socrates—I believe in Confucius—I believe in Sanconiaton—I believe in Mahomet—I believe not in Christ.

Lastly, I believe in all unbelief.

\* See "The Connoisseur," No. 9. Chalmers's edition of the "British Essayists."

I BELIEVE that there is no God, but that matter is matter, and that it does matter whether we think there is a God or no.

I believe that the world was not made, therefore could not have made itself, nor been made by anything or nothing else—that it necessarily exists, and as it did not commence, neither will it cease, to be.

I believe that man is "worse and better" than beasts; that the word soul means aggregate of mental phenomena, exhibited by individual human beings—that the body is the body—and that after death there is just as much body as before death—and that the difference between dead and living bodies is one of state, not of fact.

I believe that there are at least a thousand religions all quite true—according to those who are paid to expound them, that natural religion is one of the number, and that all religions are equally natural and equally credible.

I believe in Moses as firmly as in Bacchus—I believe in any sound philosophy, first or last—I believe in Chubb, Collins, Toland, Tindal, Morgan, Mandeville, Hobbes, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Diderot, Bonlangier, Volney, Paine, and all other men, Saint Paul of course included—with weight and measure.

I not only believe but know what is revealed; though I neither know nor believe a true religion has been or is contained in any revelation—I believe so much of tradition as is believable—I believe in the Talmud and the Koran, just as much as I do in the Bible, and I believe in the Bible just as much as I do in the Koran and Talmud—I believe in Socrates, having no reason to disbelieve in him—I believe in Confucius, Sanconiaton, and Mahomet, for the same reason—I believe in Christ, as much as I do in Adonis or Hercules.

Lastly, I do not believe in any religious belief.

It cannot be expressed how great unhappiness mankind have drawn upon themselves by imagining such phantoms as Gods, and attributing to them wrath and severity—by reason whereof, men's minds being dejected, every one trembles with fear when they hear the thunder, or when any other phenomenon happens, which he thinks indicates the anger of his God, and his intention to punish or awe him—poor miserable man!



## REVIEW.

*The Model Republic: A Monthly Journal of Politics, Literature, and Theology.* London: Watson.

THERE is in course of publication a monthly journal entitled "The Model Republic," which is calculated to do considerable good. Its chief contributor is, I believe, that indefatigable writer James Napier Bailey, whose multitudinous and well-penned productions have fairly earned for him a high literary reputation. The Model Republic is neatly printed, sensibly written, and the subjects dealt with, though not by any means exclusive, of a strictly philosophic character. In the first number, which, by the way, appeared in January last, I find the reforming views of its chief supporters thus stated:

Persons holding our views, constitute a class of reformers distinct from those charistars who would employ physical violence in accomplishing their purposes, as well as those socialists who would be satisfied with any form of government that would supply them with the necessities of life, and the amusements of community. The possession of political power we regard as the inalienable birthright of the people, nor would they be content with any form of government that would deny the exercise of that right to its subjects. Paternal forms of government, whether they relate to small societies or nations, they look upon as paternal forms of despotism. Their motto is not "war to the knife, and blood to the horse-brides," nor is it community under any form of government, whether despotic or democratic; neither do they clamour for a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, which has been considered by some the highest object of legislative policy; but they sigh for a change in the political and social institutions of the world, a change which should afford to all equal rights and privileges, abolish mercantile competition and rivalry, and place society upon an equitable basis; in short, the objects they have in view, and for the accomplishment of which they will not cease to labour, are, the acquirement of political power for the people, and the formation of home colonies on the plan originally laid down by the philosopher of Luvark.

The only inaccurate, and therefore objectionable, part of this extract, is that which relates to the question of rights. If those who conduct the Model Republic will but consider that part of their philosophy over again, I am much mistaken if they do not discover that the people have no inalienable right by birth, or otherwise, to political power. The distribution, and of course possession, of political right is contingent, like every other right, upon the chapter of accidents. Why even the right to exist is purely conventional—in other words, a right guaranteed by society, which may again, as it has often been, be annihilated by society. Even if we suppose individuals apart from all society, living in a lonely, isolated condition, they could have no practical right to anything save what they were in a condition to take—no practical right to do what they found themselves unable to perform—and as to abstract right, as it is clearly not *actual*, it is not *real*, but *ideal*, and therefore, to my thinking, neither useful nor ornamental. As, however, the "right" fallacy was fully exposed in No. 6 of the INVESTIGATOR no more need now be said about it—but there is an error in No. 3 of the journal now under review which calls for more serious and extended notice. In that number there is an article headed "The 'Incomprehensible' Idea," in which the writer asks: "Is there then no universally innate idea of Deity?" and then proceeds thus:

Let us ruminate a little on this important point—That idea cannot be innate (or manifest) which requires definition, exposition, and proofs of its existence. That which is innate is self-evident and indubitable; and to attempt to demonstrate that which is self-evident, would not only be superfluous but impossible, because in innate and self-evident ideas all demonstration itself is founded. What then is the universal idea of Deity, which christian, pagan, hindoo, mahometan, deist and atheist all hold in common? For if there be any innate idea, all must hold it in common. We answer it is the idea of *cause*. Take away the idea of causation, as an attribute of Deity, and what conception can you form of God? When man investigates the phenomena displayed in the universe he sees certain things which come not within the sphere of his experience. He beholds certain effects which he can trace to their causes, and certain other effects the causes of which he cannot perceive, and for the existence of which he cannot account. His experience teaches him that effects result from causes; for what is experience but *knowledge attained* of causes. When, therefore, he sees things the causes of which are not apparent, it would be against his experience to say that they exist uncaused, and he forthwith supposes that there is a cause, although at present no cause be visible to him. And this is precisely the idea, and the only innate or universal idea which we have of God. God is a name for the unknown cause or causes of perceivable effects.

Now God is a name for nothing of the sort. I grant it is a name for an unknown cause or for unknown causes—not,

however, a cause or causes of perceivable effects, but of the universe, which is so far from a perceivable effect that no one can possibly know or show it is an effect at all. If, as above stated, all unknown causes were Gods, why the at present inexplicable cause of phenomena exhibited by some human beings when operated upon mesmerically by others, would be erected into a God, as well by the atheist as the deist, mahometan, hindoo, pagan, or christian. It is, besides, altogether wrong to suppose the atheist holds an idea of Deity in common with any other parties. Nor is it correct to write about "universal ideas of Deity," seeing that no human being can have any other than *local* ideas, and as to "innate ideas," of course, they no more exist than innate ideas of plum-pudding. The idea of cause, like every other idea, is suggested by the action of matter, and in philosophical strictness we have no more *knowledge* of one cause than another, or rather, there is no cause of which the slightest *knowledge* can be obtained. The mixture of an acid and an alkali produces fermentation, but I would ask those who conduct the Model Republic whether we can know any more in relation to those bodies than the result which, when brought into contact, they uniformly produce. Their essential, individual, or compound nature, we are all alike ignorant of, but surely we do not all alike erect that nature into a God! Indeed, what are commonly understood by the term *causes*, are neither more nor less than certain states of matter, which our experience has taught us uniformly precede certain phenomena—but the phenomena is all that in any case we know anything about. With regard to man "investigating the phenomena displayed in the universe, and seeing certain things which come not within the sphere of his experience," I am at a loss to conceive how that can be. To me it seems a perfect contradiction to say man sees many things which come not within the sphere of his experience. It might as well be affirmed, he has a thorough acquaintance with persons or things, of which he has not the most remote idea. It cannot be too often repeated, because it is of vast importance all should be aware of the fact, that the sum total of human knowledge is derived from noting and registering effects—for, as to the essential nature of causes, we are altogether ignorant of it. *Why* flowers grow, the sun warms, the moon shines, or any other effect is produced, the wit of man may be safely challenged to explain. To declare, then, as this writer in the Model Republic has declared, that "every cause not known is a God," is equal to asserting, there are as many Gods as effects, seeing that *unknown causes* are the same in number as *known effects*.

Did space permit I would say more upon this question, but I have only room to add that my criticisms are noted down in a spirit the most friendly towards the projectors and supporters of the Model Republic, which is, in my judgment, taken as a whole, one of the ablest of the many very able periodicals that have lately swarmed from the press; but reviewing would dwindle into the most contemptible of tasks did reviewers, while dealing out well-deserved praise, hold back equally well-deserved censure.

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# THE INQUESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

## LETTERS ON THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

ADDRESSED

TO LORD ASHLEY.

II.

MY LORD—Those who affect great familiarity with the inconceivable, assure us that those whom God wishes to destroy he first makes mad, which, if true, would justify the inference that he wishes to destroy our tory ministry—for, of a certainty, no madder a ministry ever swayed the destinies of a great nation. This "strong" ministry has contrived in an incredibly short space of time to "disturb everything and settle nothing." No wonder Sir Robert Peel strongly objects to being held "personally responsible" for the acts of his government. No marvel that he is anxious to divide with his worthy colleagues the odium, if not the credit of his measures. Certainly this great tory statesman is in a pitiable plight. *He was* to set all crooked things straight, yet, after a tolerably long lease of office, with a House of Lords ready to do his bidding, and a working majority in the House of Commons, of at least one hundred, he has contrived to throw Ireland into a state of commotion bordering on civil war—to affront his agricultural friends without conciliating his manufacturing enemies—and, by his bill for the employment of factory children, to bring the dissenters upon his back. This, my lord, is his crowning act of folly—not to say wickedness. With all his astuteness, and plausibility, it is evident that the church party have overreached, or overawed, him. He is their tool, if not their dupe. Whether he plays his present suicidal part in ignorance and not in cunning, I know not—but that I know he has, by submitting to the introduction of this abominable bill, given a mortal stab to his own political influence. I have quite a little sympathy with religious dissenters as with churchmen. I am convinced that priests of all religions, established and non-established, are a national nuisance, which must be swept away by the besom of reason before society can approximate to a healthy condition. Their business is to impose upon the credulity of the credulous—to make science the handmaid of religion—in other words, to make truth the servant of fiction—to make men believe there is nothing so meritorious, nothing so worthy of a blessed immortality, as submitting tamely to their degrading yoke—in short, their business is to say and do, what it should be no man's business to say or do. But though I hold the priestly character in utter contempt, and should be delighted beyond measure if the whole posse of earth's priests were to "vanish in blue flame," if they carried the spirit of priestcraft along with them—I must despise and pity the minister who, in this "age of reason," is foolhardy enough to join with our crazy old church in the vain hope of crushing dissent.

You very well know, my lord, that by this education bill, no child can be employed in a factory who may attend a wesleyan, independent, baptist, or other denominational

school of protestant dissenters—that by this bill each school is to be under the government of seven trustees—one to be the clergyman of the parish, two of the others to be the churchwardens, and the remaining four to be chosen by the justices of the division—the clerical trustee to be permanent chairman, to have a casting vote, and to superintend the religious instruction of the children, while the master and his assistants are to be appointed by the trustees, subject to the approval of the bishop. Of course, therefore, these schools will be church schools, under the sole and unlimited authority of our bishops. Mr. Richard Ash said, at a public meeting, held in the city of Bristol, that :

Even in the case of a dissenter who, at his own expense, may have erected and supported a school in connexion with his factory, it will be necessary for him to have the church of England children taught what he must consider totally untrue, and of a most dangerous tendency: namely, that in their baptism they were made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

It can surprise no one that such a bill should make churchmen wild with joy. Never before did they receive so great a God-send. If Pitt had not forestalled the title of "heaven-born minister," they would at once have bestowed it on Peel. Only think what a haul the church will make so soon as this "pious" bill comes into operation, for be it known to all whom it may concern, that, by virtue of one of its provisions, the new schools are to receive pecuniary assistance from the poor-rates, *but not to be subject to any control from the rate-payers*—so that dissenters will, in almost all instances, be compelled to pay what these bishop-regulated people choose to charge them for teaching their children a modification of true christianity, which, as dissenters, they must repudiate with horror.

But if churchmen are frantic with joy, as might be expected, dissenters are frantic with wrath. They "rage and madden through the land," uttering bitter imprecations against our conservative government, and vowing what *they will* do when the proper time comes to vindicate the glorious principles of civil and religious liberty. The dissenters have not been so liberal for the last half century, at least, as this bill has made them. Civil and religious liberty is now everything with them. That is all, according to their own account, they are struggling for, or care to struggle for. Curses, both loud and deep, pour out in copious streams from the mouths of dissenting priests who never before were known to care for any body's liberty save their own. But churchmen, my lord, don't mind being abused, if they can but clutch authority and the "monish." Loud cries, according to a wise adage, produce little wool—and, judging from present appearances, let the dissenters bawl ever so loud, they will neither lose less nor gain more. The noise they are making only causes churchmen to chuckle, like the oxen of fable, who, not satisfied with their own share of a field, dashed in upon the unhappy frogs, exclaiming: "This is rare sport;" but the dissenters may truly say to churchmen, as the frogs in question are fabled to have said to the oxen, "What is sport to you is death to us." In sober seriousness, my lord, the dissenters are furious at the prospect of their influence being nipped at its root by this education bill. You, as a consis-



tent churchman, will doubtless rejoice in their agony—you will rejoice to think that the “only true protestant church” has one more chance of strengthening its authority, and trampling down dissent. This bill will give that church the sinews of war. It will give them the money. That is a feature of this new church movement dissenters relish least of any. If the church had grown in riches and authority by the energies of its priests, it would have been vexatious enough—but when dissenters are compelled to enrich it by their own hard-earned substance, the tyranny is intolerable. If money were out of the question, there would be far less bitterness of feeling manifested on both sides. I have heard of a certain drowsy state preacher, who, when told by his affrighted clerk that nearly the whole of his congregation were marching to a rival “shop” on the other side of the way, only inquired if they carried their tithes along with them. It is, indeed, astonishing how sensitive all orders of priests are when their earthly interests are at stake, seeing that their hopes *ought* to be fixed on heaven. The apostles could boast neither gold nor silver, but the average of their successors can boast of nought beside—and, though I risk my reputation for orthodoxy by saying so much, I do nevertheless express as my decided conviction, that priests are as little disinterested as any class of men in existence, and would be much less enthusiastic in saving the souls of their congregation if that holy work did not materially advantage their own bodies. They preach about its being as difficult for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, as for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, yet are they no more desirous than uninspired men to be poor :

With lusty knocks  
Fighting their way to the money-box

as fiercely now as at any former period.

I mention these things, my lord, that you may not imagine I am deceived by the cuckoo-crying of dissenters about churchmen's lust of wealth, and their own disinterestedness. No, my lord, I have seen clean through the pretensions of religious dissenters ; and protest to you, in all honesty of spirit, that there is no set of men for whom I feel so little sympathy or respect as I do for dissenting priests. The cowardice, the apathy, the fierce intolerance, and low-minded chicanery they have exhibited for some years past fully entitle them to more than all the rewards this atrocious education bill will confer upon them. They have stood by and seen the principles of civil and religious liberty violated—they have cheered on the violators—and for my own part I would infinitely prefer to live at the mercy of our established clergy, than any section of dissenting priests. One of these latter complained, at a public meeting held at Bristol, on Wednesday, the 19th April, 1843, that the education bill was but a means :

To extend and aggrandise a church which already draws from seven to eight millions annually from the country—to to extend and aggrandise a church which receives large additional sums to send her bishops in a ship of war to Jerusalem and other places, and which has sent a shoal of chaplains into all the workhouses of the poor-law unions. And still she is not satisfied ; the cries and distresses of the people resound on all sides, from the consequences of the infamous and cruel corn tax. The cries and groans of the nation, the consequence of the corn tax, are deep and loud, and grievous, but the voice of the church is heard towering above all, crying, like the daughter of the horse-leech, “ give, give.”

This, my lord, is the sort of language used by irregular, against regular priests. If, like the renowned Irish animals, called Kilkenny cats, they would so far eat each other up as not to leave an inch of tail, it would be well for the nation. It seems to me, my lord, altogether visionary to expect a reform in the morals of our population, or a thorough purification of our political system, while christianity, or any other religion is allowed to mix itself up in the business and affairs of life. The only means of preparing the poorer classes of this kingdom for a larger measure of liberty and happiness than the poor of any nation have hitherto enjoyed, is by early and judicious training. If religion is to be taught at all, let it be to those and those only who are competent to prove its truth or detect its fallacies. Instead of cramming children with wild stuff about doctrinal questions of not the least importance, all available means should be employed, and would be employed, by an honest and enlightened government, to stimulate in them a desire for rational information. There is nothing whereon national or individual virtue can be founded, save knowledge. Knowledge is power, said

my Lord Bacon, and he said well. But the educators of children cannot be too careful in providing sound knowledge for them, for if true knowledge furnishes the power of just action, false knowledge furnishes no less surely the power of unjust action. It is, then, an education based on truth, and truth alone, can prevent this and all other countries continuing to be, as they have ever been, a theatre where scenes of deception, violence, and blood are continually enacted. The world has tried religion. It has been tried everywhere, and everywhere it has failed. Contentions about religion have been the bane of all societies. They have generated a moral pestilence, infinitely more destructive than all other pestilences combined. Why then will your lordship insist upon choking morality by fastening it to the neck of religion ? You may say, as it has often been said, that the morality of religion is above the mystery of it—but I have yet to learn what, save the mysterious, belongs to religion. If belief in mysteries really did moralise its recipients, no one would have cause to complain of it. The examples of history, however, plainly teach otherwise. If the morality of religion were superior to the mystery of it, upon what principle can we account for the notorious fact, that religion prevails most among the least civilised and most vicious people, and that the very worst specimens of humanity the sun ever shone upon, were enthusiastically religious ? For your lordship to urge that what I here advance is correct in respect of false religions, but incorrect in respect of christianity, because IT is a true religion, would be beside the mark, and altogether frivolous, as such a proceeding on your lordship's part would involve a *petitio principii*. You are quite free to say christianity is a true religion, and the only moralising one—but because you say it, I am not called upon to believe it. If the christian religion has produced results so vastly superior to anything produced by other religions, surely they may be pointed to—they may be paraded, not, however, as so many proofs of that religion's truth, but only as so many evidences of its being less pernicious than many others. Even though it were admitted that christianity had been far less deteriorating in its influence than many other religions, such admission by no means justifies a conclusion that, therefore, the christian religion is divine. My own judgment on the matter is, that the religions hitherto taught in the world, taken collectively or individually, have far more tended to impede, than aid, the work of moralisation.

According to your lordship, the christian religion is the only religion that can be true. I stop not to inquire by what process of reasoning such a conclusion is arrived at, but beg to remind your lordship that if there is a divine religion, the believers in such a religion should be the most divine—in other words, the most virtuous of men—and more especially should the *priests* of such a religion be pure and holy—seeing that (as we are reminded by Pope Pascal, in his letter to Henry the first) “ priests are called Gods in scripture, as being the vicars of God ;” but history's examples do not happen to favour any such conclusions. On the contrary, we shall find in history examples innumerable of individuals who united a perfect faith in the christian religion with the most detestable vices that stain human nature—and as to the priestly character, its general infamy is too well appreciated to need my writing a line in disparagement of it. Hypocrisy, fraud, intolerance, and cold-blooded cruelty, are its distinguishing features. If any one is sceptical as to cruelty, vindictiveness, pride, and lust of dominion, that have been the besetting sins of our christian priests in the aggregate, let him read “ Howitt's History of Priestcraft,” or any other similar history, and his scepticism will vanish.

Now, my lord, it is because priests are the most active demoralisers of our species, that I am specially anxious to see the power of moulding the children of poverty to their will taken from them at once and for ever. If a matter-of-fact education were given by the state to every British child, and religious teaching held back till they were competent to form something like a reasonable estimate of it, there would not be much harm done. The evil is in allowing priests to debauch the minds of our children, while they are so tender and weak as to be incapable of resisting the more than puerile priestly nonsense—

’Tis education forms the infant mind,  
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.

A truth the most stupid priests understand thoroughly, and never fail to act upon. They carefully “ bend the twig while it is young.” They hang about the cradle of infancy, and

there commence the work of intellect-stultification. Instead of aiding to unfold and strengthen the faculties of those committed to their charge, they take stringent measures to hinder their development. What they teach us while young, it would be happy for us could we forget when old. Instead of cultivating in their pupils sentiments of independence, generosity, and noble affection, they studiously make them servile, intensely selfish, and alarmed at less than shadows. Instead of urging them on in the pursuit of knowledge, they are incessantly engaged in attempts to frighten them into christian appreciation of most ridiculous beliefs. David Hume has justly remarked, that :

Virtue, which is nothing but a more enlarged and cultivated reason, never flourishes to any degree, nor is founded on steady principles of honour, except where a good education becomes general, and where men are taught the pernicious consequences of vice, treachery, and immorality.

But your lordship is aware that mystery-mongers—priests, of course I mean—do not take one thousandth part the pains to make those they mis-educate understand the pernicious consequences of vice, treachery, and immorality, as they do the pernicious consequences of disbelief in certain monstrous dogmas, that no child either can or ought to believe. Is it not notorious, my lord, that in our church and dissenting schools, children are taught as divine truth that non-belief in a man-God, who, after being born of a virgin, was nailed upon a cross, and other doctrines quite in keeping with these, is a crime of dye so deep, as only to be expiated by an eternity of torment. If the children educated in those schools have intellectual hardihood enough to demand proof of such doctrines being true, are they not silenced by rods, or helped to what Dr. South calls "hell and damnation proof." The books thrust into their hands are not treatises on science, or expositions of art, but others of a very different genus, with such expressive titles as "Nine points to tie up a believer's small-clothes," "High-heeled shoes for limping Christians," "A box of precious ointment for souls' sores," "Crumbs of comfort that fall from the master's table," "A pack of cards to win Christ," "Crumbs of comfort for chickens of grace," "Deep things of God, or milk and strong meat—containing spiritual and experimental remarks and meditations, suited to the cases of babes, young men, and fathers in Christ."

These, my lord, are the style of books placed in the hands of children by spiritual charlatans. These are the precious instruments through which dissenting, as well as church, priests "teach the young idea how to shoot." As to creating "an enlarged and cultivated reason," nothing can be more remote from their intentions. No, my lord, their object is not to *enlarge* but to *cramp* reason—and so far from ever having shown a disposition to *cultivate* reason, they have uniformly opposed every attempt to *improve* it. To make "the soul sneeze with devotion," and teach the people "solemn nonsense," about spiritual mustard pots, and faithful christians booted and spurred for paradise, priests of our divine religion have ever been ready—but never, in the whole course of their horrid history, have they shown themselves any other than haters of real knowledge, and foes of popular liberty.

Therefore, my lord, do I heartily detest priests of all climes and name—I am compelled to view them as "salaried opponents of truth and knowledge." To priests, *personally*, I have no antipathy. No, my lord, it is with their atrocious principles, and no less atrocious practice, that I war so fiercely. Experience has proved them the least fit of all human creatures to educate the rising generation. They cannot in their capacity of priests touch anything without defiling it—and until the people shake them off as dew is shaken from the lion's mane, popular liberty, based on sound educational principles, is a dream. Those who hope to reconcile religion with morality, are hopers against hope. They know not human nature, and certainly never can materially benefit it. In the soil of pure reason, all the virtues would infallibly take root and flourish—but christian, like all other priests, detest reason, and deem it their most sacred duty to crush it in the bud. Shall we, then, hesitate to snatch from their hands that power they have wielded so prejudicially to the highest interests of humanity? The propositions of Mr. Roebuck to educate the whole people in harmony with approved moral principles, and totally irrespective of religionism, would surely and speedily effect this most desirable of all desiderata.

My lord, he who said, "Let me write the ballads of a nation, and you may make the laws," was a profound poli-

tician. That sentence proves its author to have well understood the nature and all-controlling influence of education. I make no pretensions to the character of "ballad-monger," but *could* I write and circulate freely through society, especially poor society, such ballads as I *would* write, your lordship and compeers might freely make any laws, without exciting either my fear or jealousy. Once allow me the liberty, and furnish me with means to inoculate the people at large with my detestation for religious domination and political injustice, I promise your lordship such a really moral revolution before this generation shall have passed away, that the people will be virtuous without fearing either God or Devil—and continue to enjoy the fullest measure of freedom, without being any longer cheated by priests and their aristocratic allies. It is the priestly catechism that upholds priestly influence. Once, my lord, let the advocates of reason and liberty be armed with the same authority to teach the youthful population of these realms that christian priests have hitherto enjoyed, and religion will receive its mortal stroke. The real governors of the people are those who educate them. Christian priests have given to the British people almost all the instruction they have hitherto received. No marvel, therefore, that christianity is "part and parcel of the law of the land." What is part and parcel of popular education, cannot fail to be part and parcel of popular customs and national laws. If our priests ceased to controul the education of our people, they would cease to hold political influence. Now, my lord, I hold that the sooner they cease to meddle with educational matters the better. In ages of barbarism, their barbarous doctrines were comparatively innoxious—but now that useful knowledge is rapidly making its way through all the ramifications of society—it is not to be borne that priests of any denomination should be enormously paid to obstruct the course of civilisation, or pollute the understandings, under the pretence of christianly educating the people.

I am, with all due respect,

Your lordship's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

## CHAPTER ON THE TENDENCY OF IRRELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES.

### II.

THE only irreligious principles with which I am acquainted are the atheistical. Anything short of "proper atheism" is not irreligion. Deists, no less than all other believers in God, are religious men. They admit the existence of one unnatural Being, though they reject the tales told of him in priestly, *alias* sacred, books. They quarrel not with the *being* of a God, but reject as monstrously absurd the *attributes* with which he has been credited by superstitious theists. But it is obvious that belief in any thing or Being unnatural is religious belief. Such belief may be more liberal in its spirit, and less obnoxious in its effects when it assumes the deistical form than under any other, nevertheless, in principle, it is in no wise different from other religious beliefs.

The "Student in Realities" \* has furnished us with a valuable collection of "old and new definitions of the word religion." He tells us :

Many writers of some weight have attempted to define the word, but to understand them if possible, we must substitute the word *unknown* for that of God or Deity.

Lavater—faith in the supernatural, invisible, *unknown*.

La Bruyere defines religion, "the respectful fear of the *unknown*."

Vauvenargues—"The duties of men towards the *unknown*."

Du Marsais—"The worship of the *unknown*, and the practice of all virtues."

Bailly, calls it plainly, "The worship of the *unknown*, piety, godliness, humility before the *unknown*."

Voltaire—a morality common to all mankind—the remedy of the soul in short, "all that strongly binds the feelings and affections of the people."

Dr. Johnson—*Virtue* founded upon reverence of the *unknown*, and expectation of future rewards and punishments.

Rivarol defines religion—"The science of serving the *unknown*."

Maury—"The philosophy of misfortune."

Kotzebue says, "It is the philosophy of the people," that is of "iguorance."

\* See "Serious Thoughts generated by perusing Lord Brougham's Dis. course of Natural Theology," pp. 167-8.



Rees defines it, the worship or homage that is due to the *unknown* as creator, preserver, and, with christians, as redeemer of the world.

Walker defines it, "A Virtue, as founded upon reverence of the *unknown*, and expectations of rewards or punishments; a system of divine faith and worship, as opposed to other systems."

De Braham calls it "The perfection of morality."

De Bonald calls religion a "Social intercourse between man and the *unknown*."

According to Robert Fellowes (author of the "Religion of the Universe"), religion is made to consist in a blind acquiescence in the mere assertion or authoritative mandates of priests or councils—a prostration of the understanding.

In the "Church of England Quarterly Review" it is said, "Religion means the reading of a law to the people, as practiced among the Jews of old; and that such law relates to a form of *worship*, to be paid to some *unknown*."

Lord Brougham, in the introduction to his "Discourse," defines religion, "The subject of the science called *theology*," and then defines "theology" the knowledge and attributes of the *unknown*.

These definitions clearly establish that all religions have an *unknowable* basis—that belief in an *incomprehensible* being or beings, constitutes the very essence of religion, and as "proper atheists" are the only individuals who reject such belief under all its forms, it is clear they are the only parties "properly irreligious."

Now, with respect to the soundness of atheistical conclusions, and their effects upon society at large, there may be many and all very specious judgments—but there can, I conceive, be but one opinion as to the injustice of purposely misrepresenting them. Yet no kind of injustice has hitherto been so common or so sure of ample reward. Theistical sepiets and christians, orthodox or heterodox, have expressed equal horror of what they found it expedient to style atheistical opinions. A multitude of books have been written against atheists, but in no one of these, that I have met with, is atheism so much as fairly stated. God-believers have uniformly reviled God-disbelievers, they have held them up to popular execration, as worse than murderers—they have abused atheism without taking the slightest pains to understand it. Believing godliness profitable, "both in this world and that which is to come," they have treated ungodliness in a truly diabolical spirit. In their warfare with atheism, they have achieved victory after victory, without themselves receiving so much as a scratch—their usual process being, as well stated by Mr. Robert Dale Owen, to ingeniously dress up atheistical opinions "in the cast-off rags that nobody will own, and then demolish them with a comfortable complacency that everybody admires." Whether such procedure on the part of theosophists be placed to the account of their stupidity or their wickedness, will leave the fact that they have most scandalously misrepresented the opinions of God-rejectors undisturbed. Those who misunderstand opinions cannot be expected to do other than misrepresent them—but the most finished of misrepresenters are people who *will not* understand, and to this latter class a very considerable number of atheist slanderers have belonged.

These holy endeavours have been crowned with success. Atheists are in all nations held in abhorrence, not as the early christians were "for their crimes," nor for their opinions, but because they have been basely accused by priests and their abettors of entertaining opinions they never dreamt of entertaining—opinions so grossly demoralising as well as preposterous, that none save the addled brains of religionists could ever have given birth to them.

Who then can wonder that the word atheism should be in all countries the synonyme of miscreant, and that the people everywhere, "led by the nose as asses are," should hunt down atheists as though they were wild beasts? Who can feel astonished that the holders of atheistical opinions should, with some few individual exceptions, gladly "hide their diminished heads," and play the hypocrite to live in peace? Even Spinoza shrunk from the name atheist, and not more than one or two God-rejectors have ventured to entirely lay aside the mask of them.

That state of society must be unsound in which hypocrisy is at a premium, and sincerity at a discount—yet there is no society in which men are not punished for speaking what they think, and richly rewarded for speaking what they do not think.

One immense drawback upon the progress of liberal and just ideas, is a disposition as well among the learned as the ignorant to consider the consequences likely to result if certain propositions were true, rather than satisfy themselves as to their truth or falsehood—this disposition is the chief cause why many important truths have been, either scrupulously

held back from public view, or so maimed and disfigured as when seen to appear like falsehood.

Sir James Mackintosh, Dugald Stewart, and other philosophers of the same school, commonly confound in their investigations practice with principle—rejecting atheism, for example, not so much on the ground of its untruth, as because if it were not thought untrue "society would greatly suffer in its temporal interests." But the inconsistency of these parties is very remarkable and no less instructive, for while they insisted, in their various works, that truth should be loved for its own sake, and pursued for its own sake they shrunk from certain propositions as though they were pestilences, neither loving nor hating them for their own sake, but doing the latter because, if proved true, and generally accepted as true, "society would greatly suffer in its temporal interests." To be consistent, they should first have inquired, "What is true?" not, "What is expedient for practice?" Such a confusion of questions having only an indirect bearing upon each other, surely was unpardonable in them.

Mr. Stewart, in his Dissertation prefixed to the "Encyclopædia Britannica," observes:

At the time when Spinoza wrote, he does not appear to have made many proselytes: the extravagant and alarming consequences in which his system terminated, serving with most persons as a sufficient antidote against it.

Now this is undoubtedly true, but it is as true that what the "most persons" take fright at, is that very principle or thing they least understand, and that it is uniformly the custom with such ignorant and prejudiced persons to travel the old road of folly, for no other reason than that it is the easiest and safest track. To be startled and offended by new truths, is precisely what we expect from "the herd of men," first, because a new truth rebukes their old pride; second, truth is a thing difficult to master, whereas error is any man's property; third, and all sufficient, because old opinions, especially those which affect religion and politics, are more profitable than new ones. Such is the desperately immoral condition in which clerical teaching has left the people of Europe—such the degradation, the utter "swinishness" of the multitude, that the value of an opinion may be measured with tolerable accuracy by the amount of opposition that priests and their miserable dupes offer to its promulgation.

Notwithstanding this odious state of things, society has taken during the last century a few steps on the right road. That men *may* be moral without being religious, is now admitted by all whose opinions are deemed of any worth. Religionists themselves concede this point, unwillingly, it is true, but still they *do* concede it. Concessions wrung from opponents are justly deemed the most precious of all concessions. The bitter Origen Bachelier\* thinks with Dr. Chalmers, that "even in the desolate region of atheism there would be patches of moral verdure—some integrity, patriotism, compassion, natural affection, and justice." Faint praise this, but still it is praise, and though intended to damn, is, to my thinking, a mighty improvement upon the tremendously strong denunciation of the noted Robert Hall, who instructs his readers to:

Settle it in their minds, as a maxim never to be effaced or forgotten, that atheism is an inhuman, bloody system, equally hostile to every restraint, and to every virtuous affection; that leaving nothing above to excite awe, nor around us to awaken tenderness, it wages war with heaven and with earth; its first object is to dethrone God, its next to destroy man.

Sepiets are sometimes taken to task for abusing christians and christian doctrine. What think you, good reader, does not this pious christian priest do the abusive tolerably well? Nor does the bitter Mr. Bachelier, already quoted as allowing atheists *some* virtues, and their "desolate region" "some patches of moral verdure," fall far short of Robert Hall in spiteful vindictiveness or scurrilous malignity. Bachelier declares that "the aim of ALL the leading champions of infidelity is to rob mankind of the benefits derived from the christian religion, and throw them back into a state of gross and brutal sensuality."

Now this piece of brazen-faced and most vindictive impudence, can only provoke a thinking man to smile, nor should I have considered it worth a notice, did I not particularly wish the general reader to have under his eye a few select specimens of rhetorical flowers from the best cultivated

\* See "Discussion with R. D. Owen on the Authenticity of the Bible."



christian garden. He may, at the same time, largely profit by observing how tender these christians are when attacked, and how reckless when attacking—how shocked by foul language when directed against themselves, and how delighted to scatter the foulest that ever fell from lips or pen, upon the *characters*, as well as the *principles*, of their opponents.

## HINTS ON SYSTEM BUILDING.

THE INVESTIGATOR will enter upon the work of investigation unswayed by party interests, neither pledged to attack nor defend as a whole any set of opinions or any presumed system of truth whatever.

The INVESTIGATOR, repudiating the notion that truth is the ally of *systemism*, repudiating, moreover, the notion that any one class or section of society teaches either all truth or all falsehood, will labor to point out the true with the false, the evil with the good taught by each, in the hope of such a course proving far less offensive, and, at the present crisis, infinitely more useful than any other that could be pursued. (Prospectus of this periodical.)

THE eccentric Count Rumford favoured the world, in one of his "Philosophical Essays," with a *best possible system* of eating hasty pudding. The chief peculiarities of that ingenious system I find thus elaborately detailed:

"The hasty-pudding being spread out equally in a plate while hot, an excavation is made in the middle of it with a spoon, into which excavation a piece of butter as large as a nutmeg is put, and upon it a spoonful of brown sugar. The butter being soon heated by the pudding, mixes with the sugar and forms a sauce, which being confined in the excavation occupies the middle of the plate."

So far with regard to the principles upon which this hasty-pudding system rests. Now, then, for the plan of attack:

"Dip each spoonful in the sauce before it is carried to the mouth, care being had in taking it up, to begin on the outside and near the brim of the plate, as also in approaching the centre by gradual advances, in order not to demolish too soon the excavation, which forms the reservoir of the sauce."

The reader may think it strange that I had forgotten this perfect system of Count Rumford's, when the recollection of it was suddenly revived in me by the appearance of a pamphlet entitled, "The only conservative system of joint stock, commercial, and industrial association," which *professes* to do for practical politicians what Count Rumford has *really* done for hasty-pudding eaters, namely, furnish them with a perfectly complete system of action. The author of this system is a personal friend of mine, and one that I much esteem. He has the good of society at heart, and I doubt not if he accomplish all the good he intends, it will be amazingly benefited. The name of my friend does not appear on his pamphlet, so I presume he is going to act out the principle, that—

The man who writes a book for good, and not for fame,  
Will ne'er inscribe the pages with his name.

But in order to help the sale of his pamphlet, and guard against mistakes, I will mention that his *nom de guerre*, literally, *fighting name*, is Aristarchus.

In the first page of this notable pamphlet it is announced that the present state of society, in all parts of the world, is deplorable in the extreme, which all parties I believe are ready to acknowledge, though only a few eminent individuals are to be found who, from time to time, like Aristarchus, step forward with a scheme of total regeneration—a system without flaw, which, if rightly appreciated by everybody, would ensure everybody's happiness. A note that takes precedence of all other matter in the pamphlet is worth quoting, if for no other purpose than to show the confidence my friend has in his system:

The author of the following somewhat remarkable project has had great facilities for taking a comprehensive view of the present state of society. He has likewise been enabled to study most of the practised and unpractised theories of political and social constitutions. Having collected a large mass of facts from which the opinions enunciated in this tract are brief deductions, he intends to compose a laborious exposition of societaian principles. But, in the meantime, perceiving that the miseries of the people are becoming critical, he has yielded to the solicitations of numerous friends to publish a brief sketch of his views in the form of a tract. Not having the leisure to draw up a rhetorically arranged treatise, he was compelled to substitute the subjoined rather desultory explanation, which was written without any intention of its being printed. But no apology is deemed necessary on this account, as the matter expounded is of such overwhelming importance that the mode

of setting it forth is comparatively of entire insignificance. During the past twelvemonths, in whatever circles this plan has been mentioned by the originator, it has met with the most unqualified and flattering approbation. May God speed its realisation.

All this has an air of modest sincerity, that cannot fail to give general satisfaction, and I seriously advise Aristarchus not to allow his "numerous friends" to spoil him, for though their soliciting him to "publish a brief sketch of his views in the form of a tract, was well enough, I do not think the "views" would gain much by swelling their exposition into an octavo or folio volume. I am of opinion this pamphlet will sell, but if my friend Aristarchus is so ill advised as to try a volume on the same system, neither himself nor the public will be gainers. People in general, and especially judicious people, are apt to admire modest merit in a pamphlet form, but a volume about the finest project that the cleverest projector ever conceived, would go for little else than waste paper. Some years ago, a book was published in the metropolis with the imposing title of "The Philosophy of Physic." A short time before the substance of it appeared in size less proud, and with the humble title of "Medical Extracts," when it sold admirably; but when this dwarfish production assumed giant-like dimensions, with The Philosophy of Physic for title, the booksellers could not get rid of it at any price. If then Aristarchus intends to compose a laborious exposition of new societaian principles, and no advice of mine can modify such intention, I hope he will contrive to "cut it short."

The truth is, the more intelligent portion of British society is growing sick of projects and systems, nor do I see anything in the development of this, "the last," likely to cure its distaste for them. Nothing is more easy than to put on paper perfect remedies for all societaian miseries—but there is no less of quackery in pretending to give full health to society, by any single project, than in pretending, as so many quacks do, to cure all diseases of the human body by one kind of medicine. We are amused to read of people in former ages, to whom letters patent were granted, they having undertaken to find out the philosopher's stone, and to change base metals into gold—yet the projectors of these times, who so readily undertake to change, by their more than magical systems, the entire course of human affairs, and the character of human institutions, are personages just as ludicrous, because as little likely to succeed, as philosopher's stone hunters.

But though men should be wary of *systemism*, I desire no one to suppose it right to discard a new system of society simply because it is new. Such conduct would be absurd in the extreme. Nor are the projectors of *false* systems always destitute of talent and honesty. On the contrary, they are well known to be, in very many instances, men of first-rate ability, and if their systems prove mere *chateaux en Espagne*, still the research of their projectors opens the road to many useful discoveries. Sir Thomas Brown used to boast that the smattering he had of the philosopher's stone, taught him a vast deal of *divinity*, and it is not improbable that friend Aristarchus, in hunting for materials wherewith to raise his new social edifice, has fallen upon much valuable information, and perhaps made some useful discoveries. It is well-known that Glauber, in his hunt after the philosopher's stone, discovered an excellent evacuating salt, which has ever since gone by his name; and who can tell whether Aristarchus, in his hopeless search after a perfect state of society, will not stumble upon some mighty political discoveries? The subjoined passage from his pamphlet proves that Aristarchus is no common man, and though his project appears to me altogether impracticable, I think his efforts to realise it may do much good, and can do much harm:

In order that the population may have all their wants and comforts supplied, production should be enormously increased. There should be no waste of labour and materials. Every man ought to be induced to become, to a certain extent, either a producer or a distributor. Division of labour should be carried out in all trades as completely as it is in the pin and watch manufactures. The idea of *over-production* is ridiculous, a paradox to common sense, though not in what is now called political economy. The more goods are created by the work of men's hands, the better it ought to be for them. If all had enough to make them comfortable, there would be little discontent. The chartists and socialists of Great Britain, and their types on the continent, the republicans and communists, are the most formidable enemies the capitalists have now to contend with. But what brought these alarming bodies into existence? Undoubtedly the constant exhibition of intolerable suffering among the people. These societies have one continual war-cry. Their shout is, "Bread and employment for the destitute; if the government is unable to provide these it ought to abdicate," and a better and more popular one must be substituted in its place." Deprive these disturbers of the peace of their staple argument, and they will become powerless. They have now the strength of Samson, and it can



only be taken away by Dalilah-like kindness, and mild treatment. If an organised system of joint-stock trades were called into existence, in an incredible short space of time we should again behold in old England a smiling and a healthy population. Were employment and remuneration as certain to the labourer as Anora's dawn in the face of nature, joy and love would inhabit the bosoms of the dwellers in our land: and the sighs of grief would evaporate like the dew in the flowers in a summer's morn. And how could employment for labour be guaranteed except under a regular and economical system of association?

With much, nay, all of this, I entirely concur—and if a regular and economical system of association, such as Aristarchus has developed in his pamphlet, could as easily be made practically operative as Count Rumford's system of arranging and devouring hasty-pudding—or could it be shown practicable at all, nothing could be better than at once to agitate in its favour. But the fact is, that no such system could possibly come into play, unless preceded by a complete and entire revolution in human habits, feelings, and opinions. It is easy to say, "Every man ought to be induced to become, to a certain extent, either a producer or a distributor"—but the knot to be untied is, how can all men be induced to become so? While in Yorkshire, some three years since, I was told by a *bite*, that his master might make him work, but he could not make him like it—which I readily believed. Even those who all their lives have been used to hard work, have rarely a great relish for it—how then can we expect the rich, whose whole course of education has tended to breed in them a contempt, and of course disinclination, for hard work, to willingly become partners in a system of joint-stock trades, one principle of which is, that all who are connected with it must become "either producers or distributors?" There are thousands in British society, who never produce anything save mischief, and would deem themselves disgraced if compelled to distribute wealth except among and for themselves. It is undoubtedly wrong any parties should thus act, but we know they do—and it is precisely because they do, and because they think such action right, that the task of working any beneficial change as regards societarian arrangements is so difficult. It is easy to say, "The more goods are created by the work of men's hands, the better it ought to be for them. If all had enough to make them comfortable, there would be little discontent," and so on—but the deuce isn't it, that men have lived for ages under a system so anomalous and extraordinary, that the more goods they create, the worse it is for them. What *ought* to be, and what *might* be, are not so much the questions for practical politicians to handle as the more proximate ones—how much good are the people at large prepared to realise, and what are the practicable measures now to be taken by those who deem a radical change desirable?

Aristarchus himself, it is but fair to state, seems fully alive to the absurdity of castle-building, in other words, raising the most beautiful system imaginable upon imaginary foundations. He tells us that what society needs is, "a plan which can be *proved* practicable." But this is the language of all planners, and system builders. All other systems save their own, they pronounce visionary. Thus Mr. Owen's plans are stated by Aristarchus, as:

Simple and magnanimous, but unfortunately he (Mr. Owen) thinks that which will require half-a-dozen generations to accomplish, can be brought about in one. He believes, in the warmth of his philanthropy, that his plans are much more perfectable and perfect than they really are. One would think that the unpossessing appearance alone of the majority of mankind would excite doubts in his mind on this matter. But he has a habit of laying down unlimited general rules, to which he imagines all must be made to bend, which betrays him into innumerable errors and extravagancies.

Here we have projector against projector. One *my-systemist* hammering away at another—in homely phrase, kettle calling pot, black bottom. It is probable that Mr. Owen thinks the system of universal joint stock association no less visionary than Aristarchus does the universal community association. If Aristarchus is disposed to rank Mr. Owen among the doodles, Mr. Owen, I will venture to say, ranks Aristarchus among the noodles. As to Fourier's system, it is scouted by Mr. Owen as an altogether impracticable theory, which if practicable would be useless—and Aristarchus, while he allows the "transcendent genius" of Fourier, "regrets to be forced to believe his system visionary."

Aristarchus having so sweepingly condemned the grand schemes of social regeneration propounded to the world by Owen and Fourier, on the ground of their "extravagant" and "visionary" character, proceeds to lay down "a brief

summary of chief points in requisition" for a plan "which can be *proved* practicable." Here they are:

If all the various parts and sections of a plan can be shown to be in actual practice in the present state of society, and if the combination of these sections is in no wise strained or inharmonious—if there is no necessity before carrying it out to eradicate or even assault the common prejudices of the people—if capitalists can be shown that their money would be safer under the proposed system than in the existing one—if the lower classes can see clearly that by its operation they will universally be made independent of poverty—if it will not restrict the advance of any single one of the arts and sciences, but will give an extraordinary impetus to the development of the most beneficial of them—if education will expand the minds and soften the manners of every member of the associated family—if religion and morality remain in their present free state, liable to be interpreted voluntarily by every man according to the dictates of his own conscience—and if its practice can be conducted in the first place as easily as a common rail-road company, then it is not too much to say, that such a theory is eminently entitled to the deepest attention of all honest and good people.

No question of it. If the new system *will* accomplish all this none can rationally object to its immediate establishment, but the virtues of an *if* are well understood. In the foregoing paragraph there are no fewer than *nine* ifs, each as full of virtue as eggs are full of meat. Confound all *ifs* and *buts*, for they are the only drawbacks upon the finest schemes of human regeneration imaginable. Mr. Owen declares that *if* the people were prepared to understand his system, wars would cease, poverty, and the fear of poverty be unknown, the human race become one family, with one feeling, one opinion, and one interest—but not one in five thousand even of British population are prepared to understand its merits, or at all appreciate the enormous benefits it would infallibly confer upon humanity. They are blind as bats to their own interests, and deaf as adders to the voice of truth. So Mr. Owen has found them, and so I venture to predict will Aristarchus. But far is it from my wish to damp his enthusiasm in the glorious work of human improvement—and should he succeed in realising one tithe of his present expectations, he will have conferred inestimable blessings on his fellow creatures. Let him show the capitalists of Europe that "their money would be *safer*" under the proposed system, than in the existing one, and he may rely upon it not the ghost of a capitalist will refuse to aid in its establishment. Let him so clearly develop his system that the "Lower classes may see that by its operation they will universally be made independent of poverty," there can be no question as to its coming into practical operation, especially *if* its practice can be conducted in the first place as easily as a common rail-road company, and *if* there is no necessity before carrying it out to eradicate or even assault any of the "common prejudices of the people."

The hare must be caught before it can be cooked—sage, therefore, is the advice of Mrs. Glass to catch our hares before attempting to cook them. Upon the same wise principle, I recommend Aristarchus and other projectors to create a public opinion before they attempt to raise their fine systems upon it. Nothing is more easy than to wonderfully improve society in *imagination*, but really to change it radically by new systems grafted on old errors, is the hope of enthusiasts, that is, people with more blood than brains. Aristarchus assures us there is no need to attack any popular prejudices in order to facilitate the introduction and success of his project. If so, I suspect his project is not worth introducing. Strange project for reforming society must that be which should please all and offend none. The old man of fable who aimed at pleasing everybody and offending nobody, speedily discovered that he had succeeded in offending everybody and pleasing nobody. Let Aristarchus be warned by that assinine story, and no longer cherish the preposterous idea of constructing a perfect system of joint, or any other stock, associations in complete harmony with all human prejudices.

Those of my readers who would know more about this new system must purchase the pamphlet of its projector, as I have neither a disposition to spoil its sale, or crowd my columns with its details. Besides, I would rather discourage than encourage system-builders. At least as many plausible systems as there are days in the year, have, from time to time, been offered to the notice of "a liberal and discerning public," by ingenious individuals, scarce one of which is worth the paper used in their development. Mr. Owen's system approaches nearest to my idea of a rational state of human society yet given to the world, than any other, but there is not the most remote prospect of its realisation, while its advocates bend to instead of resisting popular prejudices, and regulate

their conduct rather by a sense of what is safe or convenient than by what is true and honest. A rational system of society can only be established by a rational people, and no people can be rational whose principle is not pure, and whose conduct is not honest. Aristarchus proposes to reform the world without endangering any interests or startling any prejudices—but proposing to reform the world and really reforming it, are very different things. If he succeed, he surely must “work by witchcraft, not by wit,” for no human wit can give the means of effecting so grand result by a process so harmless. But Aristarchus in another part of his pamphlet, asks, “Who of us is foolish enough to believe that the rich landowners will give way, until they are forced to do so?” which is a very queer question from an individual who tells us that the immediate adoption of his project would not attack any prejudices.

In conclusion, I recommend my readers to examine all perfect systems with a wary and suspicious eye. Systems, whether of philosophy or politics, have often been found to aid, but much oftener to obstruct the course of civilisation. The spirit of *my-systemism*, is not always the spirit of truth. To talk of perfect systems is to talk perfect nonsense. All systems are necessarily defective, and should be swept away the instant society is prepared to supply their place by better systems. Dugald Stewart has rightly said:

The passion of the Germans for system is a striking feature in their philosophy, and is sufficient of itself to show that they have not yet passed their noviciate in philosophy.

Now, there are many able politicians who are nothing if not systematic, and like Aristarchus see no difficulty in “mathematically arraigning” and governing nations. They help us to perfect sciences of society, with a self-complacency the most amusing. They deal with society just as did Count Rumford with *hasty-pudding*—but while I consider the count has made the world his debtor, by the construction of his ingenious pudding system, I am far from satisfied that the world owes much to political or philosophical system-builders.

## PHILOSOPHICAL DIGESTS.

### II.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF BACON.

It is scarce possible to estimate fairly the disposition or abilities of an author, unless we are familiar with the spirit and genius of the age in which he wrote. Human ideas are mutable as the things from whence they are derived—hence the cherished philosophy of one era, is scouted as folly in another. When, for example, Bacon commenced his gigantic work of reforming philosophy, the hypothetic system of reasoning, first devised by Aristotle, was deemed by the *literati* of Europe absolutely perfect. To suppose certain propositions true, without deigning to collect facts wherein to rest such suppositions, was then all the rage, and when Bacon dared to develop his inductive system, he was assailed from all quarters with the most spiteful virulence. For any individual to resist the authority of Aristotle, was then considered a most odious crime—nor can this surprise any reflecting reader, who considers that the mode of reasoning he had originated, had held undisputed sway in Europe for many centuries. Prior to the sixteenth century, all philosophy, as well as religion, rested upon what men imagined to be true, in a word, hypothesis. They never dreamt of collecting facts. They had no notion that such a course was necessary. After drawing conclusions, if the facts subsequently discovered harmonised with such conclusions, well; but if they did not, the facts, not the conclusions, lost credit. Instead of facts being appealed to in justification of hypotheses, hypotheses were triumphantly cited in proof of facts. It was reserved for Bacon to demolish this system, which for near two thousand years had prevailed over one fourth of the globe. Dugald Stewart tells us that:\*

The Protestant Reformation which followed immediately after, was itself one of the natural consequences of the revival of letters and of the invention of printing. But, although in one point of view only an effect,

it is not on the present occasion less entitled to notice than the causes by which it was produced.

The renunciation in a great part of Europe of theological opinions so long consecrated by time, and the adoption of a creed more pure in its principle and liberal in its spirit; could not fail to encourage on all other subjects a congenial spirit of inquiry. These circumstances operated still more directly and powerfully, by their influence in undermining the authority of Aristotle; an authority which for many years was scarcely inferior in the schools to that of the scriptures; and which in some universities, was supported by statutes, requiring the teachers to promise upon oath, that in their public lectures they would follow no other guide.

This statement of Mr. Stewart's must convince the most sceptical, that the spirit which prevailed in Bacon's time, was essentially anti-philosophic, or rather barbaric. No doubt protestantism aided in opening the way to a better development of national genius and resources. It is unquestionable that protestantism was at first “more pure in its principles, and more liberal in its spirit,” than the catholicism it supplanted. The expounders of new religions are always more liberal and innovative than the defenders of old ones. To say that the age of Elisabeth was not in all its essential features more liberal than any preceding Christian age, is to assert what is belied by historical facts. It was during the reign of that remarkable woman that the first attempt was made to set aside the authority of Aristotle, and establish the authority of right reason. But, though Bacon attempted and performed so much, he was by no means the *beau ideal* of a philosopher. His writings are infected by the prejudices of his age, more especially those of them affecting religion. They are full of puerilities, odd conceits, and inconsistencies the most extravagant—but it should be remembered that he flourished at a period when to breathe or pen a syllable against established faiths, was “death by the law,” and when there was not the slightest chance of any individual obtaining eminence in the state, however transcendent his genius, or great his moral worth, about whose orthodoxy there was any suspicion. Is it to be supposed for an instant, that such a religious virago as Elisabeth, or heretic-hater as James her successor, would have tolerated the open expression of disbelief in the “saving doctrines” of christianity? I conceive, therefore, that if much my Lord Bacon wrote was utterly nonsensical, large allowance should be made in his favour, seeing that if he found it a task at once both difficult and dangerous to reform philosophy, he would undoubtedly have found, had he made the attempt, the task of reforming religion much more difficult, and infinitely more dangerous. That we are warranted in concluding Bacon would have written more sense and less nonsense about religious topics, had he lived at a later period, will appear from the following statement of his leading ideas with respect to logical philosophy, which is transcribed from the “French Encyclopédie:”

The objects about which our minds are occupied, are either spiritual or material, and the media employed for this purpose are our ideas either directly received, or derived from reflection. The system of our direct knowledge consists entirely in the passive and mechanical accumulation of the particulars it comprehends: an accumulation which belongs exclusively to the province of memory. Reflection is of two kinds, according as it is employed in reasoning on the objects of our direct ideas, or in studying them as models for imitation. Thus memory, reason strictly so called, and imagination, are the three modes in which the mind operates on the subjects of its thoughts. By imagination, however, is here to be understood, not the faculty of conceiving or representing to ourselves what we have formerly perceived, which differs in nothing from the memory of these perceptions, and which if it were not relieved by the invention of signs would be in a state of continual exercise. The power which we denote by this name has a nobler province allotted to it, that of rendering imitation subservient to the creations of genius.

These three faculties suggest a corresponding division of human knowledge into three branches. 1. History, which derives its materials from memory; 2. Philosophy, which is the product of reason; and 3. Poetry (comprehending under this title all the fine arts), which is the offspring of imagination. If we place reason before imagination it is because this order appears to us conformable to the natural progress of our intellectual operations. The imagination is a creative faculty; and the mind before it attempts to create begins by reasoning upon what it sees and knows. Nor is this all. In the faculty of imagination, both reason and memory are to a certain extent combined, the mind never imagining or creating objects but such as are analogous to those whereof it has had previous experience. Where this analogy is wanting, the combinations are extravagant and displeasing; and consequently, in that agreeable imitation of nature, at which the fine arts aim in common, invention is necessarily subjected to the control of rules which it is the business of the philosopher to investigate.

This clear exposition of Bacon's leading ideas with respect to a logical division of knowledge is ascribed to D'Alembert, one of the ablest as well as the most enthusiastic of his admirers, and is admitted to be perfectly accurate by the best

\* See Dissertation first appended to the Encyclopedia, Brittan. p. 15.



philosophical critics. But if Bacon included all knowledge under three heads or branches, as history, which derives its materials from memory—philosophy, which is the product of reason—and poetry, which is the offspring of the imagination, how could he have been what is properly called a religionist? All religions have their source in pretended conceptions about things or existences of which no human being is allowed to have any experience. But if Bacon thought that our minds never imagine or create objects save such as are analogous to those whereof it has had previous experience, what becomes of theology? Theology is not properly historic, nor philosophic, nor poetic. No doubt theology is the thing of imagination, but if, as we are here told, that all the mind's combinations are extravagant and displeasing, if not analogous to those whereof it has had previous experience—it follows, that all conceptions about God are extravagant and displeasing, seeing that he is a Being having nothing in common with anything which operates upon human sense. If, as D'Alembert has elsewhere asserted, that with material and spiritual existences, history and philosophy are equally conversant—but as for imagination, it is entirely confined to the material world, the conclusion is inevitable, that an immaterial God, or immaterial existence, is altogether unimaginable. Now, what is unimaginable cannot be the subject of thought at all. It does appear to me, therefore, that unless D'Alembert has misinterpreted Bacon—the latter must, if consistent, have rejected as mere jargon, all opinions respecting immaterialities.

Dugald Stewart\* has observed, that :

In this exclusive limitation of the province of imagination to things material and sensible, D'Alembert has followed the definition by Descartes, in his second meditation, *Imaginari nihil aliud est quam rei corporee figuram seu imaginem contemplari*—a power of the mind which appears to me to be most precisely expressed in our language by the word conception. The province assigned to imagination by D'Alembert is more extensive than this, for he ascribes to her also a creative and combining power—but still his definition agrees with that of Descartes, inasmuch as it excludes entirely from her dominion both the intellectual and the moral worlds.

What Mr. Stewart understood by intellectual and moral worlds, I cannot pretend to say. He is mystical to perfection in his speculations about mind. If he did not limit the province of imagination to things material and sensible, I should be glad to know what he did limit it too. It is ridiculous to write about excluding from the dominion of imagination both the moral and intellectual worlds—for, in the first place, there is no real distinction between our moral and intellectual nature—in the second place, imagination, judgment reason, are only so many phenomena exhibited by material forms, when acted upon and reacted upon by other material forms. Mr. Stewart had a notion that mind is an entity, a thing manifesting phenomena, not itself a phenomenon. The adoption of so gross an error, of course disqualified him from understanding the full import either of Bacon's classification, or the luminous exposition given of it by D'Alembert.

Bacon seems to have entertained a high opinion of the human soul, as he distinctly declared his disapproval of that "confused and promiscuous method in which philosophers are accustomed to treat of pneumatology—as if the human soul ranked above those of brutes, merely like the sun above the stars, or like gold above other metals"—from which expressions it is evident he considered that the soul of man has nothing in common with the souls of brutes.

The strength of his genius is no where more fully shown than in the "Novum Organon," that most celebrated of all his productions. Professor Playfair has truly observed, "That one of the considerations which appears to have impressed Bacon's mind most forcibly was, the vagueness and uncertainty of all the physical speculations then existing, and the entire want of connection between the sciences and the arts. Though these things (continues Professor Playfair) are in their nature so closely united, that the same truth which is a principle of science, becomes a rule in art, yet there was at that time hardly any practical improvement which had arisen from a theoretical discovery. The natural alliance between the knowledge and the power of man seemed entirely interrupted—nothing was to be seen of the mutual support which they ought to afford one another—the improvement of art was left to the slow and precarious operation of chance, and that of science to the collision of opposite opinion."

Of Bacon's political philosophy comparatively little is

known. During the reigns of Elisabeth and James, the representative principle was but in embryo. In those days the rights divine of monarchs were the only rights any one presumed to mention. It is in no wise astonishing, therefore, that Bacon said much about reforming philosophy, while perfectly silent about reform of parliament. The representative system, in Queen Elisabeth's time, was a farce, or worse, a bitter mockery. Freedom of debate was out of the question—and every one can understand that a House of Commons composed of individuals who risked their liberty, or, perhaps, lives, by opening their mouths, would be disposed to keep them closed. But Bacon has declared, "The ultimate objects which legislators ought to have in view, and to which all their enactments and sanctions ought to be subservient, is *that the citizens may live happily.*"

Speaking of Henry the seventh's laws, he observes, "They were deep and not vulgar—not made on the spur of a particular occasion for the present, but out of providence for the future, to make the estate of his people still more and more happy, after the manner of the legislators in ancient and heroic times."

Whether his judgment of Henry the seventh's political aims were sound or not, the above passage proves that Bacon well understood what *should be* the aims of all good politicians.

Some of his aphorisms, on political innovations are of a character equally liberal and profound. A stubborn retention of customs (said he) is a turbulent thing, not less than the introduction of new. Again, time is the greatest innovator—shall we not, then, imitate time, which innovates so silently as to mock the sense? In the first book "De Augustinis Scientiarum," may be found a vast number of aphorisms, breathing a political spirit that cannot fail to gratify the lovers of progress. In that book may also be found reflections on the necessity of accommodating all institutions to the character and condition of the people for whom they are intended. No philosopher seems to have more deeply felt, than Lord Bacon, the importance of well educating all classes of the people. He bestowed on education the title of the *Georgics of the mind*, identifying, as Dugald Stewart well remarks, by a happy and impressive metaphor, the two proudest functions entrusted to the legislators, the encouragement of agricultural industry, and the care of national instruction. In both instances the legislator exerts a power which is literally *productive or creative*, compelling, in the one case, the unprofitable desert to pour forth its latent riches—and, in the other, vivifying the dormant seeds of genius and virtue, and redeeming from the neglected wastes of human intellect a new and unexpected accession to the common inheritance of mankind.

## MR. LLOYD JONES AND MR. C. SOUTHWELL.

THE subjoined letter has been forwarded to the "New Moral World Editor."

SIR,—I gather from pages 377 and 378 of the Congress Report, now in course of publication, that Mr. Lloyd Jones, after referring to "a spirit of disaffection" among the members of Branch A, 1, said:

"Mr. Southwell publicly delivered a lecture in John-street institution, under the sanction of the branch, in which he condemned the policy of the society, inasmuch that one of the members, and one too who had not always been satisfied with things as they were, was obliged to rise in order to remove the impression Mr. Southwell had made upon the audience."

Now, sir, it strikes me that this proceeding on the part of Mr. Jones is calculated to produce a very bad and unsatisfactory result to the selection of the people, and the society have long been, and are now pursuing. One of its immediate effects will be to provoke a conflict he had no disposition to engage in. That conflict is now unavoidable. Mr. Jones has, rashly and unadvisedly, placed himself in a position, from which he will probably find it difficult to escape with honour. By mixing up my name with the disasters of John-street branch, and labouring to make it appear, from hearsay or no evidence at all, that I contributed by my lecture of the 16th ult., to "create disaffection among its members," he has made a *faux pas* not easily to be retraced. Having brought a charge against me—indirectly, to be sure, but not on that account less injurious—of doing mischief to branch A, 1, by speaking what I thought of socialist policy—and, presuming his perfect willingness to substantiate such charge—I do hereby invite Mr. Lloyd Jones to meet me in public debate—the question for debate being "Socialist Policy."

Be it, however, distinctly understood, that it is with socialist policy, not socialist principles, I propose to battle. I do not impugn or call in question the principles of socialism; but I do impugn, and do call in question the entire policy pursued by socialists, since the memorable onslaught made by Exeter's bishop, in 1839. I pronounce that policy false in principle, futile in character, and utterly disastrous in results. As Mr. Jones is of a different opinion, he will, no doubt, volunteer a defence of that policy; when I shall feel much pleasure in entering the lists against him.

If a *rite* uses, or platform, debate be determined upon, I propose that the proceeds of such debate (if any), be applied for educational or some other useful public purpose. If, however, Mr. Jones prefer a written war of ideas, he may rest assured I will not balk him—it being quite immaterial to me whether that war be carried on by tongues or pens.

I am pledged to leave England before the close of next month, so that if Mr. Jones determine to accept my invitation, he will see the necessity of sending me an early notice of his intention.

By giving this letter a conspicuous place in the forthcoming number of the "New Moral World," you will simply do me act of justice to your friend.

Friday, May 26th, 1843.

2, Wells-street, near the New Church, Camberwell.

LONDON: Hetherington, Fleet-street; Watson, Paul's Alley, Paternoster-row. And all Booksellers.

\* See Note 1 page 5, of preface to the First Dissertation, prefixed to Encyclopedia Britannica.

# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

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TWOPENCE.

TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

LETTER VIII.

YOUR GRACE has seen the villifiers of reason foiled by their own weapons. My last letter has established the important fact that it is reason determines faith, not faith determines reason—in other words, that all faiths, however irrational they appear to others, are thought perfectly rational by those who hold them.

Having established the fact that every man's faith to *him* appears reasonable, your grace cannot escape the decisive conclusion, that to demonstrate the unreasonableness of all faith is to demolish it.

Let christians writhe as they may under this novel species of castigation, they will be unable to deny the fact of a man's faith ceasing to be his faith the instant he sees its absurdity, and therefore must allow that to declaim against reason is to declaim against that without which no faith could be. A really rational faith, I promise your grace, no infidel in the world will object to. Produce them such a faith and the "spiritual unity" for which religionists are struggling, will be instantly achieved. The query is, can any religious faith be truly rational? Your grace may confidently expect that the rankest unbelievers will not object to a reasonable faith. To faith based on facts and sound reasonings they have not the least objection—it is only senseless, fiction-based faith the philosophic infidel objects to. Such a sort of faith he holds all religious faith to be, and therefore he rejects it.

But then, your grace may say that religionists are of a different opinion. I at once admit the fact—and such being the fact, I can see no other mode of determining the true faith, or preventing the spread of false faith, than by the encouragement of free discussion upon all interesting topics, and *specially* those which concern religion. Doubtless men will always think erroneously upon some points, but it is certain they are less likely to become the victims of false opinions when every opinion shall be allowed a free course, than they are so long as only one set or order of opinions are tolerated.

The corner-stone of christianity is christian faith. Your grace is chief expounder of that faith. As Archbishop of Canterbury that faith must be very dear to you—but even you will not dare to say that *faith* is not rational. You no doubt think it rational enough—but if you *think* it otherwise, I do not expect you to *pronounce* it a foolish faith. If, however, all the world's priests were to tell me it is wise to believe folly to be divine truth, I would not hesitate to tell them they lied. But the average of them are too wily to say so much, it being only a stray priest or two, such as the crazy Tertulian, who believed Christ was the son of God *because it was a foolish thing*. I am sure your grace would as soon think of parting with your archbishopric as saying that you believe Christ was the son of God, because it is foolish to believe so.

Were I a christian, with that full faith in devilry all sound christians must have, I should conclude that such priests as

Tertulian were agents of Satan, who only assumed the christian garb the more effectually to wound christianity. Leslie, whose orthodoxy was without blemish, has placed it upon record that the Devil doth ape God, not only in his religious institutions, his feasts, sacrifices, &c., but likewise in his priests, without whom, he justly observes, no religion, true or false, can stand. Where Leslie got this information touching the Devil's proceedings, I cannot say, but your grace may see that he published such information, by consulting his "Short and Easy Method with the Deists." Those, therefore, who have faith in Leslie may well conclude that all bad priests are not God's but the Devil's. Nevertheless, the supposition that God permits his great antagonist the Devil to ape him, not only in his institutions, sacrifices, &c., but also in the immensely important particular of priests, is really sufficient to make sound believers suspect that there are more of the Devil's than God's priests in the world, seeing the intolerance, deceit, wars, and "innumerable number" of other mischiefs of which they are the authors.

If Leslie do not libel the Devil, it is quite proper to conclude that all priests who object to the free exercise of reason are Satan's emissaries. There are no pleasures so lasting, no virtues so solid, and no thoughts so pure, as those which spring from strong, well-cultivated reason. To suppose a God who wishes to weaken or degrade human reason, is to suppose a Being with far less than the average of human virtues. To purify human reason, is to purify human society. Our vices are born of our errors. Now errors have their source in perverted reasoning faculties. Truths, said Rousseau, are in things, errors in our conceptions of them—and surely any attempt to convince your grace that to reason sagely is the highest of all human prerogatives, would be superfluous. Man is spoken of by our poets as "noble in reason, and infinite in faculty"—but reason, to be noble, must be pure, exalted, and generous—it should harmonise with individual and aggregate nature—it should embrace all that our infinitude of faculties can master—it should disdain all alliance with fraud or falsehood, and calmly resting upon the eternal rock of things, fear not that the gates of hell, that is falsehood, should ever prevail against it. But as though they were indeed the Devil's agents, priests in general, and christian priests in particular, have laboured incessantly to corrupt the reason they could not utterly destroy. While bidding us rejoice in the possession of a "rational soul," they have sought directly and indirectly to degrade our rationality to the low level of their worse than brutish superstition. The anti-religious Godwin said:—

I like better to be a man than a brute: and my preference is just. A man is capable of giving more and enjoying more. By parity of reasoning, I had rather be a man with talent, than a man without. I shall be so much more a man, and less a brute. If it be in my own choice, I shall undoubtedly say, "Give me at least the chance of doing uncommon good, and enjoying pleasures uncommonly various and exquisite."

Such, your grace, are the sentiments inspired by genuine philosophy. There is no man living who would, if he could,

\* See "Essay on the Utility of Talent,"



change places with the happiest of brutes. Reason, in very many cases, proves a less skilful guide to man than instinct does to brutes—but there is no man whose wits are not quite out at elbows who would wish less of the human and more of the brute in his composition. There are many persons of so unhappy a temper, and so charmed by paradox, as to laud reason most extravagantly on the one hand, while lauding brutism as extravagantly on the other. Many of these unhappily-tempered people seem bent on diminishing any distance that may lie between brute and human nature—not, however, by drawing brute character closer to the human, but conversely, the human character closer to the brute. But, your grace, “I like better to be a man than a brute,” not because men have been so merciful, so truthful, in a word, so rational, in their sphere of action, as brutes have in theirs, but because their sphere of action is infinitely larger. The reason of brutes will not admit of progressive development—whereas, human reason seems destined rapidly to advance.

The reason of brutes dies out with the individual possessor. Every generation of monkeys must seek for itself, and treasure up for itself, all the experience it can become master of. So with all other brutes—so with every creature save man—and therefore it is the bee is as wise now, and no wiser, than the first bee human eyes ever saw—therefore it is the beaver builds his house, and the ant its hill, precisely as beavers and ants have ever built. Nor do I hold it wise to measure man's advantages so much by what he has done as by what he *may* do. If he has made terrible mistakes, there is at least a probability he will correct them—if he has abused his faculties, and realised on earth the hell his heated imagination has pictured, there is, at least, “the chance of his doing uncommon good, and enjoying pleasures uncommonly various and exquisite.”

I beg, therefore, your grace will not imagine I am one of those who *envy* brutes, or have the smallest inclination to be credited with any of the numberless negative virtues they unquestionably exhibit. My desire is to increase, not diminish, the distance which now lies between human and brute natures. To aid in rationalising my fellow-creatures is what I hope to do—and it is because priests are so much *useless* baggage fastened to the backs of progressors that I labour to remove them. Had I faith in the existence of a Devil, did I credit the wild tales about that mysterious personage, I should at once conclude with Leslie that at least nine-tenths of the priestly trite were his ministers. If there be a Devil, he cannot desire the extension of knowledge—it looks, therefore, very *black* against priests that they oppose the extension of knowledge by all convenient means. The Devil's kingdom could not stand if “a knowledge of truth covered the earth as the waters cover the ocean's bed;” but your grace is well aware that there are no greater enemies to the spread of truth than priests. To them in the aggregate may fitly be applied the lines said to have been spoken by the prince of darkness to Gilbert Foliot:

Dum revolvis tot et tot,  
Dens tuus est astator.

While thus you're revolving on good and evil,  
This world is your heaven, your God is the Devil.

Your grace may think I am rather too hard upon the ghostly fraternity, who “justify the ways of God to man,” and accomplish so many other tasks, no less Herculean, rational, and useful. But when did the expounders of holy mysteries take the lead in any useful work?—when did they heap honour and rewards on the discoverers of novel truths? What are the philosophies—what the sciences or arts to which priestly brains have given birth? Is there a single page of history that is not stained by a recital of their monstrous crimes? If they were lovers of truth and reason, even your grace must confess they had an odd way of showing their affection. Is it not notorious that the church over which your grace has the *honour* to preside—the church called protestant, which owed its existence to men who set up reason as the standard and measure of things divine—is now, as it has ever been, a persecuting church—improvement's chief foe, and right reason's deadliest antagonist. What your grace and all other *good* churchmen call the glorious reformation, has been aptly described as “the vehement protest of mankind, that *authority* was no longer the ground of belief, but that *reason* alone could claim that title;” and yet to this very day do protestant priests load reason with fetters—to this very day they aim at the destruction of every man who

sets aside their authority as ground for belief utterly rotten, and insists that no irrational faith can be divine or true. Spinoza wisely said that, “the unique method of making the arts and sciences flourish is to allow every individual to teach what he thinks at his own risk and peril”—and why not religion? Can your grace inform me why religion, equally with the arts and sciences, would not be greatly profited by governments allowing every and any individual to teach what he thinks respecting it at his own risk and peril? Perhaps it may be replied, all individuals are so allowed, that they can, at their own risk and peril, teach any opinions, religious or irreligious. But such a reply would have no reference to Spinoza's meaning, as it is evident that the risk and peril of *reputation*, not of *person*, was what he considered sufficient guarantee against false teaching—and why religionism should be the only kind of knowledge needing the aid of physical force to maintain itself in existence, it is for religionists themselves to explain. No one ever heard of art or science suffering from the rudest assaults of reason. They gain everything and lose nothing by the most searching examinations, and if your grace's religion is true, I do not see how it can be injured by passing the ordeal of full and free investigation. But religion and truth are not always in harmony, so that it commonly happens men who have most of the latter care least about the former. Religion is obviously neither an art nor a science, nor anything describable. Its-If alone, “there is nothing in the heavens above, the earth beneath, or the water under the earth,” with which it analogises or harmonises. If, as the disciples of Robert Owen assert, religion “consists in the unceasing practice of promoting the happiness of every man, woman, and child, to the greatest extent in our power, without regard to their class, sect, party, country, or colour”—it is a something to be grappled with and understood; but your grace is too well instructed not to know that the practice of promoting our fellow-creatures' happiness is a practice purely moral, which, having its source in generous feelings, is best promoted, or rather ensured, by the expansion and wise development of such feelings. The moral man is he who deals justly with his fellows—the religious man is he who obeys the will of one or many Gods. But whereas, the will of unnatural Beings, if such Beings there are, can only be guessed—what constitutes just conduct is easily to be understood; hence, with regard to conduct, men usually form a tolerably accurate estimate—while, with respect to godly will, they are wide as the poles asunder. The religionist satisfies his conscience by performing his duty to God, deeming his duty to man a matter comparatively trivial. The moralist who is not religious knows nothing of duties in relation to Beings unknowable, and is assured that the essence of virtue consists in aiding to the utmost of our individual ability the great work of improving the condition, and of purifying and strengthening the reason of his fellow-creatures. To chat and scribble, as *mere* Owenites do, about rational religion, is ridiculously useless. Their “yarns” on that threadbare subject “are full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,” which, according to Shakspeare, is a species of fulness peculiar to “tales told by idiots.”

Unquestionably, your grace is assured the christian religion, as by law established, is perfectly rational—but you as unquestionably reject with horror, the idea of placing divine christianity on a level with mere moralities. *They* are of the earth, earthly—while the principles of religion are of the heaven, heavenly. Religionists have always resisted every attempt to degrade them into moralists. They appeal to higher sentiments, higher truths than natural truths—indeed, so thoroughly exalted are all religious truths and sentiments, that they are fairly out of sight, at least, I never could catch a glimpse of them. The celebrated John Adams declared in a note to his friend, the no less celebrated Jefferson, that all the wisdom he had gathered from sixty years religious reading, was included in the four words, “Be just and good;” but what has justice or goodness to do with doctrine? If your grace and co-religionists do not grossly cheat us, the perfect practice of all the virtues will avail us nothing, without is superadded implicit belief in the “saving truths” of christianity. Without that, if our priests lie not, the best of us, “are sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.” There is hardly a sermon read from christian pulpits, which contains not anathemas against the “miserable sinners” who are wicked enough to suppose that what men believe is of no conse-

quence, if they do but act well—and that the chief, nay, sole, aim of a wise people, would be to exercise all our faculties to the greatest possible extent consistent with prudence, so that pleasures the most lasting and intense of which our nature is susceptible, might be universally enjoyed. The ancient who said all time not spent in love was pure loss, has been finely abused by christian theologians, and without doubt such teaching was open to objection—but I am sure that all time not spent in contributing to our own pleasure, or the pleasure of others, is worse than wasted. The famous Aristippus was wont to say:

It is good to prune the passions, but not to tear them up by the roots. There is no crime in gratifying the senses, provided we do not suffer ourselves to be enslaved by them.

This your grace, is the language of common sense, a kind of language which one cannot but regret is so seldom heard in our churches and other houses of God. But how should men speak wisely before they think wisely? Our priests seem to imagine that tearing human passions up by the roots, is far better than sagely employing and directing them. A man without passions, would be without the very springs of life and action. To annihilate the passions, were that possible, would be to annihilate all energies, all generous sentiments, all talents, in a sentence, all that constitutes us men—yet are christian and other priests continually denouncing the passions, and persuading their audiences that a love of pleasure is nothing short of criminality. Their books are filled with charges the most gross against the worthies of antiquity, who taught that pleasure was the chief good—and while upon this question, I beg to point your grace's attention to an article in the "Examiner," of Sunday, February 25th, 1843, in which the views of Epicurus are excellently stated. The writer observes in one part of his admirable article, that:

The Epicureans, as every scholar ought to know, distinctly allowed that the pleasure which procures a greater pain, or hinders a greater pleasure, ought to be regarded as a pain; and, on the other hand, they held that the pain which procures a greater pleasure, or prevents a greater pain, was to be accounted a pleasure. But what is the use of saying this? What is the good of asserting that the great spring of action was a true estimate of pleasure? You are met by some silly answer about "Epicurean hogs," and "the doctrines of the sty," and there's to be "the end of the matter."

The poet Cowley was too good-natured to be obstinately unjust, and said something better than this:

"When Epicurus to the world had taught  
That pleasure was the chiefest good,  
And was perhaps it the right, if rightly understood;  
His life, he to his doctrine brought,  
And in a garden's shade that sovereign pleasure sought.

Pleasure, on that right understanding, we take to be the just exposition of both epicureanism or utilitarianism.

I do not remember to have before met with so pithy and just defence of either. It is not often that newspapers cut so deep in a philosophic direction—and the appearance of such irreligious sentences in the "Examiner's" columns, was to me a no less amazing than pleasing sign of the times—I call them irreligious sentiments, because the inevitable tendency of religion is to make our race miserable. The chief good, according to religionists, is to make people believe they are "vile earth and miserable sinners," that this state of existence is probationary, to be succeeded by another, with more than its intensest delights, and none of its miseries. *Their summum bonum* is to be found in heaven—not in a heaven on earth, but some place beyond the visible. Of course it is natural that such people should imagine enjoyment of any kind something like a violation of God's holy law, seeing "it never was intended we should be happy here." This world is only for "work-a-days," the next will be for Sundays.

Persuaded, as I am, that no people can become truly moral until they are made truly reasonable, and fully satisfied that happiness can only rest securely on a truly moral foundation, the grand question with me is, how can the people of this and other nations be made truly reasonable in the shortest time? My answer to that self-put query is, by shaking their faith in all irrational creeds, and dogmas. Mark, your grace, all irrational creeds and dogmas—if there are any rational ones, I have neither the disposition nor the power to shake them. A rational religion would undoubtedly be a most excellent religion—but though I have heard and read much of such religion, I am still at a loss to conceive in what it consists, or where it is in action. The religion your grace deems rational, has nothing in common with the religion

Owenites deem rational, and candour constrains me to declare that I am quite content with trying to be "just and good"—and non-content to be any religion whatever. There is not one that seems to me either rational or useful. As to what Owenites call rational religion, it is not religion at all—it is moral conduct, springing from their conceptions of moral truth. That sect has sadly blundered upon the religious question, and judging from their present proceedings, it seems likely they will blunder on to the end. Their wishing to be thought a religious sect, was a capital blunder. Such wishing exposed the cloven foot. If they had taken their stand upon science, and either have attacked religion in name and substance, or not have meddled with it at all, they would long ere this have achieved a mighty revolution in the affairs of men. But the chiefs of that sect would leave their system with religion, or, at least, make it appear they had, and your grace has seen the result. Your grace has seen a great political party dwindle down to a mere sect, neither feared nor respected—a sect without character, and of course without the influence which character alone can give.

Now, your grace, I may be wrong in my opinions, but it cannot be denied that I do honestly express them, and I frankly tell you that I am not of any religion, nor will I ever consent to join any party that is either religious, or thinks fit to call itself religious, unless your grace succeed in convincing me that a rational religion may be found by those who seek for it; because the moment I am fortunate enough to meet with such a religion, I will embrace it, whether such religion be called christianity, mohammedanism, deism, or anything else. The owenitish religion I accept, not, however, as religion, but as morality. Purposely, or by mistake, in a truckling or a foolish spirit, the leading disciples of Mr. Owen have confounded moral conduct with religious action, and hence their utter confusion of ideas with respect to both topics.

Having now sufficiently explained my views, with respect to faith and reason, and carefully drawn the line between religion and morals, I will, in my next letter, endeavour to convince your grace how important are the consequences flowing from this species of philosophy.

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. CUTHWELL.

## PHILOSOPHICAL DIGESTS.

### III.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPINOZA.

I HAVE been no less startled than delighted by the perusal of an article in a late number of the "Westminster Review," on "Spinoza's Life and Works." The article in question, which is from the pen of G. H. Lewes, has been republished in a pamphlet form, so that the curious may obtain a copy at small cost and of convenient shape. It is admirably written, and though all genuine Spinozists must consider many of the writer's conclusions utterly fallacious, none can fail to admire his lucid, distinct, and comprehensive exposition of Spinoza's philosophy. That philosophy has been strangely neglected by our metaphysicians. Mr. Lewes has well remarked, that:

The purely metaphysical portion of Spinoza's system had few adherents until the modern German speculators proclaimed his greatness; but since Jacobi, Lessing, Herder, and Goethe, there has been no Leipsig fair that has not shown its essay for or against Spinoza; and three or four translations of his works already exist. In France he has also lately attracted some attention, and from influential quarters. In England a few solitary students have gratefully acknowledged his excellence; but the regular professors, such as Reid, Stewart, Brown, Mackintosh, Mill, &c., make no pretension to an acquaintance with him. Yet there are few names in the history of philosophy more worthy of a serious consideration.

That Spinoza has not been deeply and patiently studied by our "regular professors," we have tolerably clear evidence in the fact, that they have not yet decided whether he was a religious or irreligious speculator—a theist or atheist. Mr. Lewes, at the conclusion of his article, tells us that "Spinoza, the 'ribald atheist,' turns out, on nearer acquaintance, to be" a "God-intoxicated man." "The blasphemous Jew becomes a pious, virtuous, and creative thinker," whereas Mr. Dugald



Stewart, and almost all other philosophers of the Scotch school, have insisted that Spinoza was an atheist, who, from motives of convenience, wore the mask of theism, or rather pantheism—and it must be allowed that the philosopher who teaches that God is inseparably, as well as essentially united with his works, in other words, that God and nature form together but one Being, is really an atheist—for what is atheism, if not disbelief in any existence not natural. Spinoza's own words were, "*Deum rerum omnium causam immanentem, non vero transeuntem statuo*," to which, as Mr. Stewart observes, no other meaning can be annexed, save this, that God is inseparably and essentially united with his works, and that they form together but one Being.

The reader, however, will do well to suspend judgment upon this contested point, until he has carefully gone through the whole of this "Digest," as I shall presently proceed to examine the bases upon which Mr. Lewes founds his opinion that, so far from Spinoza being an atheist, he was a "God-intoxicated man"—for certainly it does appear, from all the evidence I have been able to collect, that such an opinion is quite unwarrantable. Dugald Stewart does not seem to have been very well informed as to the details of Spinozism, but he nevertheless appears to have understood much better than Mr. Lewes its general principles, and to what conclusions those principles irresistibly lead all who consistently embrace them.

As the philosophy of Spinoza originated in that of Des Cartes, a correct idea of the latter is an indispensable preliminary to a perfect knowledge of the former. Of the Cartesian philosophy Mr. Lewes thus writes:

The Reformation had stirred all minds to new and vigorous action; and the philosophy of Des Cartes is the most striking product of the newly-enfranchised reason. Dissatisfied both with the scepticism and dogmatism he saw around him; unable to find firm ground in any of the prevalent systems; distracted by doubts of everything high and low, holy or trivial; mistrusting the conclusions of his own understanding, and seeing that his own senses often deceived him, he resolved to make a *tabula rasa*, and reconstruct his knowledge. He resolved to examine the pretensions of every conclusion, and to believe nothing but upon the clear evidence of his reason. He began by universal doubt. He not only cleared his mind of all its previous stock of opinions, but pushed his doubts to the very verge of self-annihilation. There he stopped; there, in self—in his own consciousness—he found an irresistible fact, an irreversible certainty. He could doubt the existence of the external world and treat it as a phantasm; he could doubt the existence of God, and treat it as a superstition; but of the existence of his thinking, doubting mind, no doubt was possible. He, the doubter, existed, if nothing else existed. Hence his world-famous *Cogito, ergo sum*: I think, therefore I am.

I exist. No doubt can darken such a truth; no sophism can confuse this foundation of all possible knowledge. This is a certainty, if there be none other; this is the starting point and basis of all science. But whence this certainty?—from *consciousness*. Consciousness, then, is the basis of all truth: there is none other possible. Interrogate consciousness, and its clear replies will be science. On examining my consciousness with this view, I find that not only do I exist, but that I am miserably finite and imperfect. By my finitude, therefore, I am conscious of not being the All; by my imperfection of my not being the Best. Yet an infinite and perfect Being must exist, for infinity and perfection are implied as co-relations to my ideas of finitude and imperfection. The Infinite and Perfect can be none other than God. God therefore exists; his existence is clearly proclaimed in my consciousness, and can no more be a matter of doubt than can my own existence.

God, being perfect, cannot deceive us; it is we who deceive ourselves, by taking vague and confused ideas for clear and true ones. To guide us in the pursuit of truth these four rules are indispensable:

1. Never to accept anything as true but what is evidently so; to admit nothing into the mind but what so clearly and distinctly presents itself as true that there can be no reason to doubt it—(Independence of authority).
  2. To divide every question into as many separate questions as possible; that each part being more easily conceived, the whole may become more intelligible—(Analysis).
  3. To conduct the examination with order, beginning by that of objects the most simple and therefore the easiest to be known, and ascending little by little up to knowledge of the most complex—(Synthesis).
  4. To make such exact calculations, and such circumspections, as to be confident that nothing essential has been omitted.
- Thus did Des Cartes, from the ground of consciousness, reconstruct the belief in his own existence, and in the existence of God and of the world. It was a great scheme, and in his day an important one. Amidst the chaos of opinions a ground of certainty was needed; Des Cartes found one in consciousness.

What the assumptive *cogito* (I exist) has to do with the existence either of the world or an unnatural Being apart from the world, I do not clearly see. Granting that Des Cartes really existed when he said he did, all other questions remain just as they were. But were it worth the pains, I could show, without difficulty, that Des Cartes did not prove his consciousness, but took it for granted, it being manifestly as impracticable to demonstrate consciousness as to demonstrate body. The only mode of proving the existence of

body is by appealing to body, and unquestionably the only mode of proving consciousness is by an appeal to consciousness. The principles on which all human knowledge rest must be begged, and if not granted, there is no ground on which any kind of knowledge can be raised. We are told above that Des Cartes resolved "to examine the pretensions of every conclusion, and to believe nothing but upon the clear evidence of reason." The observation is ridiculous—for what "clear evidence" could Des Cartes have had of his own existence? The assertion "I exist," is not of a nature to admit of being evidenced. Ancient sceptics, as S-xtus Empiricus, maintained that every proposition requires a prior proposition to support it—and so, in logical strictness, it does—but what prior proposition could be found to support this Cartesian proposition? The thorough-going sceptics were quite consistent. They denied that any proposition could be proved true. Every proposition, said they, requires a prior proposition to support it, and so on *ad infinitum*, or else it assumes some axiom which cannot be proved, and is to be taken for granted without demonstration, and consequently may be denied with the same force with which it is assumed. They farther maintained that nothing can be known by means of itself, nor by means of something else, whilst that other remains unknown, and that other must either be unknown or be known by means of something else, and so on *ad infinitum*. Now, if these arguments be worth anything, Des Cartes' proposition is worth nothing, viewed as a *proved* proposition—for they show it to be as nakedly dogmatic a dogma as ever was promulgated. His metaphysical science (if this view of the subject be warrantable) rested upon an unproved proposition. It has often been observed that individual consciousness is proof of itself; but the remark involves a gross error—nothing it is possible to call in question can be admitted in proof of itself—and as every conceivable proposition *may* be called in question, it follows that the fact of consciousness *may* be called in question. Were I challenged by an opponent to logically prove the existence of my own body, I could not do so by appealing to my body—and if reasoning in a circle is non-admissible with respect to body, or an external world, how can it be admissible in respect of consciousness? Whether mind be considered as substantive, or merely a succession of sensations, it cannot be consistent with logical propriety to prove its existence by simply appealing to its existence. Yet this is precisely what Des Cartes did. His "world-famous *cogito ergo sum*," therefore, amounts to just nothing, save naked assumption. I grant it to be "the starting point and basis of all science;" but it is absurd to call it a *certain* basis, no such basis being conceivable. Nor do I allow, notwithstanding this feeble attempt to show the logically speaking, uncertain proposition on which all science rests, that Des Cartes could seriously doubt the existence of the world. Still more remote am I from the belief that he could treat it as a phantasm. Many men may have *fancied* that they doubted the existence of an external world, but the probability is that not one ever *really* did so. Pyrrho himself as practically believed in an external world as do Yorkshire ploughmen. A writer in the "Penny Cyclopædia" article "Sceptic," has observed that the question of an external world is in itself a matter of indifference, seeing that we are so constituted as to be affected in the same way as though it had this external reality. But surely, if we are thus constituted, it cannot be that any individual ever seriously and practically doubted the reality of things. To say that "Des Cartes, from the ground of consciousness, reconstructed the belief in his own existence, and in the existence of God, and of the world," may be all very well, but it is evident the said ground was a proposition purely dogmatic. And as to reconstructing the belief in a God, I am not aware that that belief was in a fallen condition at the period Des Cartes lived—nor can I discover that he has thrown a particle of new light upon the God-question. If we allow that his "ground" was without flaw, that it was a ground of certainty, there is nothing like "the existence of God" built upon it. But this part of Des Cartes' philosophy I need not dwell upon, for Mr. Lewes understood very well that even if it be admitted that proving our consciousness by appealing to our consciousness is admissible in logic, there would neither be logic nor sense in the proposition "I exist, therefore God is." The words of Mr. Lewes are *Cogito, ergo sum*, I think, therefore I exist, is irresistible—but *Cogito, ergo Deus est*, I think, therefore God exists, is no syllogism.

Spinoza, it appears was "striving to solve the inexplicable

riddle of the universe, when the writings of Descartes fell in his way." Mr. Lewes tells us:

Des Cartes captivated him no less by the boldness of his logic than by the independent nature of his method, which sought truth in the inner world of man, and not in the outward world, nor in the records of authority. He studied with avidity; but he soon found that there also the riddle remained unsolved. He found the fact of his own existence superfluous (he demonstrated); but the far greater existence in which his own was included—of which the great All was but a varied manifestation—of this he could find no demonstration. . . . . The solution of the problem of the τὸ ὅλον καὶ τὸ ἑν— the one immutable Being on whom all things depend, had still to be discovered.

The latter portion of this extract seems to imply that Des Cartes had not discovered the great All's existence, whereas, Spinoza did. Now, I cannot discover that he made any such discovery. It is true that Spinoza affected to have discovered a God—but then, he called it *substance*, and affirmed that extension and thought were its *attributes*. Between the philosophy of Des Cartes and the philosophy of Spinoza, there is a radical difference, for while, as Mr. Lewes himself admits, Des Cartes, in common with most philosophers, had assumed a duality—that is to say, a God, and a real universe created by God—Spinoza affirmed their oneness or unity. According to Des Cartes, substance was by no means "the primal fact of all existence." According to Spinoza, the only absolute existence is substance. Des Cartes insisted that extension and thought were substances. Spinoza ranked them as mere attributes. "By a subtle synthesis (says Mr. Lewes) Spinoza reduced the duality of Des Cartes to his own all-embracing unity, and thus arrived at a conception of The One." Very well. But what One? The One of Spinoza is the God of Spinoza—let us then endeavour to determine it. Des Cartes assumed the existence of two ones—one universe and one God. Spinoza would not allow the existence of more than one Being, which Being he called God and Substance. Spinoza's idea is thus explained by Mr. Lewes:

The absolute existence—the substance—(call it what you will) is God. From Him all individual concrete existences arise. All that exists, exists in and by God; and can only thus be conceived. Here, then, thought he, the mystery of the world begins to unfold itself to the patient thinker; he recognises God as the fountain of life; he sees in the universe nothing but the manifestation of God; the finite rests upon the bosom of the infinite; the inconceivable variety resolves itself into unity. There is but one reality and that is God.

I accept this as pure Spinozism, and certainly anything more like "grossest atheism of the D'Holbach school" it is difficult to imagine. Between D'Holbach and Spinoza there was no fundamental difference of idea, but only a difference of words. D'Holbach would have said, "There is but one reality, and that is Nature." Now, whether with Spinoza we say, "There is but one reality, and that is God," or with D'Holbach, "There is but one reality, and that is Nature," affects not one iota the idea suggested by the sentence *taken as a whole*. Dugald Stewart contends,\* that as Des Cartes held extension to be the essence of matter, he must necessarily have conceived *materiality* to be an essential attribute of God—but who, save a Cartesian, or a philosopher of the immaterial school, ever commits himself so far as to talk about material attributes? Attributes are ideal not real. The idea of extension for instance, is derived from things, but cannot be itself a thing. Mr. Lewes introduces Spinoza as asking himself:

What is the *noumenon* which lies beneath all *phenomena*? We see everywhere transformations perishable and perishing; yet there must be something beneath which is imperishable, immutable—what is it? We see a wondrous universe peopled with wondrous beings, yet none of these beings exist *per se*, but *per aliud*: they are not the authors of their own existence; they do not rest upon their own reality, but on a greater reality—on that of the τὸ ὅλον καὶ τὸ πᾶν. What is this reality?

Aye, what is this reality? I ask, too. Mr. Lewes answers it is substance—for which *information* I am thankful, though it leaves me just where I was when I asked the question—for what substance is I try to, but cannot, conceive. Mr. Lewes tells me he does not understand substance in the gross and popular sense of "body," or "matter," but that which is *substant*—which is standing under all phenomena, supporting and giving them reality—which understanding of his may be correct enough, but it is indisputably an understanding totally beyond the reach of my understanding. The tale told by

certain people of eastern nations, about the elephant who stands under the world, the tortoise that stands under the elephant, and the nothing that stands under the tortoise, is, at least intelligible—but a something called *substance*, which though neither "body" nor "matter," yet "stands under all phenomena supporting and giving them reality, is not quite intelligible. Nor is Mr. Lewes's definition of a phenomenon very clear or precise. A phenomenon, he tells me, is "an appearance, a thing perceived, a state of the perceiving mind"—and then proceeds thus:

But what originates this perception—what changes the mind from its prior to its present state? *Nothing*, external and extrinsic, changes it. What is this something? What it is, in itself, we can never know: because to know it would bring it under the forms and conditions of the mind, that is, would constitute it a phenomenon—unknown therefore, but not denied—this *ens*—this something, *is*; and this Kant calls *noumenon*. This Spinoza calls *substance*.

Granting, as I readily do, that something is, and being decidedly of opinion there is nothing but something, I care little whither with Kant we call it *noumenon*, with Spinoza, *substance*, or with D'Holbach, *nature*. The name we choose to associate with the thing, will not harm the thing, or destroy its reality. So long as no words are used suggestive of the *duality* idea, the atheist is satisfied—for he conceives it erroneous to suppose there is more than one existence. Notwithstanding the disclaimer on Spinoza's part, put forth by Mr. Lewes, and others, I unhesitatingly assert, that with respect to the existence of an unnatural Being, a God, there is not a shade of difference between the opinions of D'Holbach and Spinoza. Both rejected the idea of creation—and of course with the idea of creation must fall that of a creator. Both asserted the everlastingness of something, which something they agreed is the universe. Both refused to admit the substantiality of attributes, and the reality of phenomena. Both rejected the God-idea, though only D'Holbach was in a position to reject the God-word, and both of course rejected the principle as well as substance of religion.

The attempt to prove Spinoza a "God intoxicated man" has met with some success, but the cheat cannot long remain undiscovered. It is natural that his admirers, both here and in Germany, should take some pains to cover his doctrines with the varnish of religion. They are no doubt convinced that atheistical pills will never be swallowed with alacrity, unless well gilded by a little falsehood—but though it may be *tact* to write Spinoza religious, to write him atheist would be *truth*. Mr. Lewes informs me that "To live with God, to know God with perfect knowledge is the highest point of human development and happiness, and to this Spinoza consecrated his life." This sentence is grossly deceptive, and it is so because the word God is there used in a sense Spinoza never thought of attaching to it. To live with *nature*, to know *nature* with perfect knowledge, Spinoza undoubtedly *did* think was the highest point of human development and happiness, and to *that* he consecrated his life. It is really grievous to contemplate the mischiefs produced and errors perpetuated by an *abuse* of the word God. In the instance just given, my readers cannot fail to perceive that by a substitution of the word nature or universe for that of God, an entirely new and opposing sense is given to the whole paragraph. It is impossible to appreciate the philosophy of Spinoza unless we understand that he thought *God and the universe formed together but one Being*, in other terms, that there is only one BEING, which is *substance*, whose eternal *attributes* are *extension* and *thought*. With a view to satisfy the reader that I am not misrepresenting Spinoza, I will now give what Mr. Lewes properly observes it is advisable every reader should have, namely, "his own mode of statement." That gentleman has translated a portion of Spinoza's "Ethica," and of this translation I shall avail myself, first, because no one can suspect it *glossed with atheism*—and secondly, because it contains the very cream of Spinozism. The *Ethica* opens with eight

## DEFINITIONS.

I. By Cause of itself I understand that, the essence of which involves existence; or that, the nature of which can only by considered as existent.

II. A thing finite is that which can be limited (*terminari potest*) by another thing of the same nature, *ergo*, body is said to be finite because it can always be conceived as larger. So thought is limited by other thoughts. But body does not limit thought, nor thought limit body.

III. By Substance I understand that which is in itself, and is conceived *per se*: that is, the conception of which does not require the conception of anything else as antecedent to it.

\* See Dissertation First, prefixed to the Encyclopedia Britannica.



IV. By Attribute I understand that which the mind perceives as constituting the very essence of substance.

V. By Modes I understand the accidents (*affectiones*) of substance; or, that which is in something else, through which also it is conceived.

VI. By God I understand the Being absolutely infinite; that is, the substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses an infinite and eternal essence.

Explanation. I say absolutely infinite, but not *in suo genere*; for to whatever is infinite but not *in suo genere*, we can deny infinite attributes; but that which is absolutely infinite, to its essence pertains everything which implies essence, and involves no negation.

VII. That thing is said to be free which exists by the sole necessity of its nature, and by itself alone is determined to action. But that is necessary, or rather constrained, which owes its existence to another, and acts according to certain and determinate causes.

VIII. By Eternity I understand existence itself, in as far as it is conceived necessarily to follow from the sole definition of an eternal thing.

Such are the famous definitions with which Spinoza commences his *Ethica*. They are all purely atheistical. Is it not clear from the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth definitions, that he did not allow the existence of anything but substance. Now, a substantial universe we know exists, while a substantial God, "consisting of infinite attributes," we cannot even conceive the existence of. The "absolutely infinite," according to Spinoza, is substance. The absolutely infinite, says the atheist, is substance. Wherein, then, lies the difference between the theistical Spinoza and the atheistical D'Holbach? Why, I think they only differ in appearance, the seeming difference resulting from Spinoza's unfortunate trick of using two words to express the same idea. D'Holbach was content to call substance, substance—Spinoza called the "absolutely infinite, God and Substance." That he did so from prudential motives, there is great reason to believe. Spinoza was a man of rare talents, and virtues equally rare—but it must be acknowledged that he did "stoop to conquer" religious prejudices. This is not my opinion only. Even Dugald Stewart, saw through, the wordy gauze in which Spinoza had enveloped the fundamental principle of his system—justly remarking, that "he (Spinoza) occasionally accommodated himself with a very temporising spirit to the prejudices of the world. Mr. Lewes asks his readers if they can reconcile the fact of Spinoza's philosophy being eminently religious, with the other fact of its having been almost universally branded with atheism? Now, I think they will be unable to answer that question satisfactorily, if they allow the first fact to be a fact. Those who are so shallow as to imagine the philosophy of Spinoza eminently religious, and Spinoza himself "a God-intoxicated man," will indeed be puzzled to reconcile such imaginings with the undoubted fact that his philosophy is almost universally branded as atheistic, and himself denounced as "the most impious of blasphemers."

The axioms and propositions of Spinoza are worthy a place here, not only on account of their intrinsic excellence, but as furnishing ample material whereon a judgment may be raised, with respect to the religion or no religion of their author. The axioms to which I refer are seven in number, and are as follow:

#### AXIOMS.

- First. Every thing which is, is in itself, or in some other thing.
- Second. That which cannot be conceived through another, *per aliud*—must be conceived, *per se*.
- Third. From a given determinate cause the effect necessarily follows; and *vice versa*, if no determinate cause be given no effect can follow.
- Fourth. The knowledge of an effect depends on the knowledge of the cause, and includes it.
- Fifth. Things that have nothing in common with each other, cannot be understood by means of each other, that is, the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other.
- Sixth. A true idea must agree with its original in nature.
- Seventh. Whatever can be clearly conceived as non-existent, does not in its essence involve existence.

#### PROPOSITIONS.

- I. Substance is prior in nature to its accidents.  
Demonstration. Per Definitions 3 and 5.
- II. Two substances, having different attributes, have nothing in common with each other.  
Dem. This follows from Def. 3; for each substance must be conceived in itself and through itself; in other words, the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other.
- III. Of things which have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other.  
Dem. If they have nothing in common, then (per Axiom 5) they cannot be conceived by means of each other; *ergo* (per Axiom 4), one cannot be the cause of the other.—Q.E.D.
- IV. Two or more distinct things are distinguished among themselves, either through the diversity of their attributes, or through that of their modes.  
Dem. Everything which is, is in itself, or in some other thing (per

Axiom 1), that is (per Def. 3 and 5), there is nothing out of ourselves (*extra intellectum*) but substance and its modes. There is nothing out of ourselves whereby things can be distinguished amongst one another, except substances, or (which is the same thing, per Def. 4) their attributes and modes.

V. It is impossible that there should be two or more substances of the same nature, or of the same attribute.

Dem. If there are many distinct substances, they must be distinguished by the diversity of their attributes or of their modes (per Prop. 4). If only by the diversity of their attributes, it is thereby concluded that there is nevertheless only one substance of the same attribute; but if by their diversity of modes, then substance being prior in order of time to its modes, it must be considered independent of them; that is (per Def. 3 and 6), cannot be conceived as distinguished from another; that is (per Prop. 4), there cannot be many substances, but only one substance.—Q.E.D.

VI. One substance cannot be created by another substance.

Dem. There cannot be two substances with the same attributes (per Prop. 5); that is (per Prop. 2), that have anything in common with each other; and therefore (per Prop. 3) one cannot be the cause of the other.

Corollary 1. Hence it follows that substance cannot be created by anything else. For there is nothing in nature except substance and its modes (per Axiom 1, and Def. 3 and 5); now this substance not being produced by another is self caused.

Corollary 2. This proposition is more easily to be demonstrated by the absurdity of its contradiction—for if substance can be produced by anything else, the conception of it would depend on the conception of the cause (per Axiom 4), and hence (per Def. 3), it would not be substance.

VII. It pertains to the nature of substance to exist.

Dem. Substance cannot be produced by anything else (per Coroll. 1), and is therefore the cause of itself; that is (per Def. 1), its essence necessarily involves existence; or it pertains to the nature of substance to exist.—Q.E.D.

VIII. All substance is necessarily infinite.

Dem. There exists but one substance of the same attribute; and it must either exist as infinite or finite. But not finite, for (per Def. 2) as finite it must be limited by another substance of the same nature, and in that case there would be two substances of the same attributes, which (per Prop. 5) is absurd. Substance therefore is infinite.—Q.E.D.

Here the reader has under his eye the most striking and characteristic features of Spinozism. We have penetrated the *sanctum sanctorum* of that philosophy, which some of its most able exponents tell us is superlatively religious. But methinks there is much, very much of an irreligious, or at all events, heterodox tendency, in the "Definitions," "Axioms," and "Propositions," I have quoted. Take proposition III. and see to what it tends. That proposition is incontestably one of the most important the human brain has evolved. If it be true, there is no true religion, there never has been a true religion. "Of things which have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other." Thus stands the proposition. But if of things which have nothing in common, the one cannot be the cause of the other, how can the God adored by christians, or by Jews, or by any religionists, who maintain that their God has nothing in common with the universe, have caused the universe? If the universe was not caused by a something external, or at least apart from itself, it never was caused at all, but must ever have existed. Spinoza, it should be carefully remembered, lays down as certain truth that there is but one substance, which he calls God—but if his proposition III. be not utterly false, the one thing called indifferently by the names Substance and God, is an uncaused thing. Besides, if God is substance, and substance is the only existence, nothing ever began to be, in a word, nothing ever was created—for proposition VI. distinctly informs us, that "One substance cannot be created by another substance"—substance cannot create substance—according to Spinozism, and I freely admit it—but if substance cannot create substance, and God is no less substantial than the universe, it is plain the universe could not have been created. I need not dwell upon the consequences to religion of such a conclusion—they are obvious, and fatal as obvious. Evasion is here out of the question. Nothing can be more intelligible and decisive than these propositions. Proposition V. tells me, "It is impossible that there should be two or more substances of the same nature, or of the same attribute." Proposition II. tells me that "Two substances having different attributes have nothing in common with each other"—while, from proposition III., I learn that "Of things which have nothing in common, one cannot be the cause of the other." The inevitable conclusions from all which are, that all is substance, that that substance is self-existent, and that that substance is God, or that there is no God.

Verily this word substance was found by Spinoza remarkably convenient. The existence of substance, said he, as well as its essence, is an eternal truth—but a most strange

thing is the something called substance. It is not *matter*, it is not *body*—but still we are assured, a *something*. Those who are in the secret assure us it is “the great reality of all existence.” Spinoza made it the “all-in-all, the everything-in-everything,” and not content with making it that, he erected it into a God. He deified his own ignorance as so many philosophers had done before him. Is it not *almost* unaccountable that he who penned the axiom, “A true idea must agree with its original in nature,” should have been tempted or betrayed into the use of a word, that is not the sign of an idea, the original of which is nature? Spinoza taught that whatever is, is God. But he meant by the word God, what the atheist means by the word substance, namely, the thing which exists, and of necessity exists.

I am fully sensible of the lax manner in which the term atheist is commonly applied, but we are justified in calling all men atheists who, like Spinoza, make of God and nature but one Being. When Seneca taught that God is nature and nature God, he taught atheism. When Paracelsus taught that God is the circle and centre of all things, produced from himself, he taught atheism—and what but pure atheism is contained in the dogma of Spinoza, that there is only one substance, which, by its two modifications of thought and extension, is infinitely varied, and contains in itself the necessary causes of its own mutation? What more could “a gross atheist of the D’Holbach school” say than this? Spinoza distinctly declared that “all final causes are but human fictions;” he further declared that “The eternal and infinite Being, which we call God, or nature, acts by the same necessity by which it exists.” If this be not atheism, it is at least so much like it that I am unable to discover the difference. Again, Spinoza taught that God is without passions—he has neither joy nor sadness, neither love nor hate, and that God is the *res cogitans*, but does not know things abstractedly.\* Strange sayings these of a “God-intoxicated man.” The same excessively “religious philosopher” not only undertook to show that “all final causes are but human fictions,” but penned the biting truth that “Men go on inquiring after the cause of causes till they fly for refuge to the will of God, which is the *asylum of ignorance*.” Verily, of a doctrine so pre-eminently “religious” as this “gross atheist’s,” I will right willingly make “pure christians” a present. It has been asserted that the *resemblance* between spinozism and atheism is merely verbal, but, in point of fact, it is the *difference* between spinozism and atheism that is purely verbal. Mr. Lewes is sadly annoyed that so “religious” a philosophy as Spinoza’s should be almost universally branded with atheism. To make “intelligible” so awkward a fact, he cites three causes:

First. The readiness with which that term of obloquy has been applied to opponents from time immemorial; to Socrates as to Gottlob Fichte. Second. The obscurity of party vision and the rashness of party judgment. Third. The use of the ambiguous word substance, whereby God was confounded with the material world.

These are the causes which, according to this reviewer, perfectly reconcile the presumed fact of Spinozism being essentially a religious philosophy, and the known fact of its being “almost universally branded with atheism.” Now the reader will remember I have before admitted and censured the loose manner in which the term atheist has been applied. All atheists are fully sensible how much their progress has been impeded and their philosophy disgraced by the theological custom of “branding with atheism” all whose religious opinions were slightly heterodox. D’Holbach observes in his “Christianity Unveiled,” that:

Christian theologians have never agreed among themselves as to the proof of the existence of a God. They treat each other as atheists, because their demonstrations are by no means the same. There are few christian authors who have written about the existence of God, without incurring the charge of atheism. Des Cartes, Clarke, Pascal, Arnauld, and Nicole, are all regarded as atheists.

All this is established truth. No one familiar with the history of metaphysics would attempt to call it in question. But though Des Cartes, Clarke, Pascal, Arnauld, Nicole, and a crowd of other authors, have been falsely as foolishly charged with atheism, we should carefully guard against receiving as religious and God-intoxicated a philosopher whose writings are thoroughly irreligious, and utterly incompatible with the belief in anything save nature. Such a philosopher was Spinoza. Like Apollonius Tyanæus, and many other ancients, he held as incontrovertible

truth that God means all things, and all things mean God, in other words, that the universe, or variously modified substance of all things, is the only, as it is necessarily the eternal, something. Those who insist that Spinoza was a most religious pantheist, of course take much trouble to show that pantheism is not atheism. A plain man is apt to suppose that to say, all is God, is just equal in effect to affirming there is no God; but no, Spinoza having declared that God is the one and all, his “religious” disciples have laboured to demonstrate that though the universe is all, and all is God, yet God is not the universe, nor the universe God. The famous Schelling’s fine-drawn distinction between pantheism and atheism, which Mr. Lewes pronounces “accurate,” is worth transcribing:

God is that which exists in itself, and is comprehended from itself alone; the finite is that which is necessarily in another and can only be comprehended from that other. Things, therefore, are not only in *de-re*, or through their limitations, different from God but *to-tenere*. Whatever their relation to God on other points, they are absolutely divided from him on this, that they exist in another, and he is self-existent or original. From this difference, it is manifest that all individual finite things taken together cannot constitute God; since that which is in its nature *derived* cannot be one with its original, any more than the single points of a circumference, taken together, can constitute the circumference, which, as a whole, is of necessity prior to them in idea.

Distinctions without differences are often discovered by philosophers. The German philosophers in particular are quick to detect, and very willing, as well as able, to “accurately draw them.” The labour, though great, is to them a labour of love. To it they have been ever found to apply themselves *con amore*. This distinction of Schelling’s is one of the class. It is drawn so very fine, that to catch a glimpse of its substance, vulgar eyes will find impracticable. Bacon said of ontology,\* that it produced nothing but “cobwebs of learning” which, as Bacon happily expresses it, are admirable indeed for the fineness of the thread and work, but of no substance or profit.

The aim of Schelling was to mark the boundaries which separate pantheism and atheism. Like the rest of Spinoza’s German disciples, he was determined to have a God, even though it should be one of his own creation. He would willingly have found one ready-made, but though introduced to many, none exactly hit his taste, so that to spin one out of his own brain was necessary. Let no one suppose I libel German doctors, as I do not, unless, indeed, it be in philosophy, as we know it is in law, namely, that the greater the truth the greater the libel. It is a notorious fact, that German philosophers, of the Spinoza school, talk as glibly about creating a God, as vulgar folks do about creating an appetite. The famous Fichte was heard to say upon a certain occasion, that in his next lecture, he was going to *create* God. Madame De Stael *thought* his meaning was that he intended to show how the idea of a God arose, and unfolded itself in the mind of man—and, perhaps, she thought sagely—but what would be thought by the God-worshippers of this country, were a philosopher to appear before them, and say, as Fichte did to the German public, that “In the history of beings there are three grand epochs, the first belongs to the empire of *chance*—the second is the reign of *nature*—the third *will be* the epoch of the *existence of God*—for *God does not exist yet, he is only preparing to exist*. Nature tends to an apotheosis, and may be regarded as a divinity in the germ?” It is probable, or rather certain, that the man who should dare to utter such phrases before an audience of English religionists, would do so at the cost of his reputation for sanity, or orthodoxy—or both orthodoxy and sanity. The idea of a God who is to exist by-and-by, of course therefore not existing yet, though preparing himself to exist, may be called theistic, pantheistic, or simply mystical, but I pronounce it decidedly atheistic. That Fichte attached to the word God any one of the multifarious popular meanings attached to it no one can suppose. His idea of God was strictly individual, the idol of his own brain, and being intelligible to himself alone, was not of the slightest value to any one else. The reader has seen that “The use of the ambiguous word substance, whereby God was confounded with the material world,” is given by Lewes as one of the three causes of spinozism, being “almost universally branded with atheism.” But how singularly inconsistent, or something worse, is that

\* Ontology, as usually defined, is the science of *being* as distinguished from phenomena—a discourse on the *nature* of things apart from their appearances.



writer, for while condemning the word substance as ambiguous, he freely uses the word God, as though no one ever dreamt of doubting its meaning. The most ambiguous of all words is God. Of the material world we have some practically certain knowledge, but of a God, confounded with or separated from the material world, we have no conception, and of course therefore no knowledge. When Schelling tells me that "God is that which exists in itself, and is comprehended from itself alone," I profit nothing, because I understand nothing. If, however, I am allowed to interpret for myself his word *God*, or, better still, perhaps, allowed to substitute the word *nature*, all is perfectly intelligible, and perfectly philosophic—for nature necessarily exists in itself, and is necessarily comprehended from itself alone. When he tells me that "Things are not only in degree, or through their limitations different from God, but *toto genere*," I am not instructed, but confounded. The first self-questioning such language suggests is, "How could Schelling know God? If God himself is not a thing? How could he know that things are not only in degree, or through their limitations different from God, but *toto genere*?" He declares in a tone and spirit perfectly oracular, that "Who ever may be their (things) relation to God on other points, they are absolutely divided from him on this—that they exist in another, and he is self-existent or original." Never, to a certainty, was I more randomly dogmatic than this put by pen to paper. The fallacy it contains is at once audacious and transparent. Admitting the existence of an unnatural Being, called God, clearly proved, it cannot be that we can comprehend or judge of its relation to, or action upon, things. The relation things bear to things, we are enabled to judge of, because we more or less comprehend them. And just so of their action one upon another. Supposing nature to have a barrier which separates it from the unnatural, we cannot leap it. The unnatural, if it really exist, is to us as though it existed not—then, how can anything human know that an inhuman Being is either divided from, or confounded with, things? How can anything human know that "things exist in other existence," and that he (God) is self-existent or original?

It can amaze no one that Schelling, having laid down premises thus rabidly dogmatical, should arrive at conclusions altogether wide of sense and possibility. Having premised that God is absolutely divided from things, he logically concluded that all individual finite things taken together cannot constitute God. Having premised that "The finite is that which is necessarily in another, and can only be comprehended from the other"—whereas God is the infinite, which exists in itself, and is comprehended from itself alone—he logically concluded things were *derived* as well as *divided* from them. So much for Schelling's "Accurately drawn distinction between pantheism and atheism," which is the lame attempt of an ingenious and highly mystical visionary, to give spinosism a religious interpretation.

The great mistake of Spinoza himself was his systematic departure from the principle contained in his memorable words, that "*The correct definition of a thing includes and expresses nothing but the nature of the thing defined.*" Had he acted consistently with such teaching, his magnificent system could never have been obscured and blurred by the senseless mysticism which now hangs about it. Had he steadfastly refused to define anything real or supposed, of whose nature nothing is or can be known, his path would have been smooth, easy, intelligible, and glorious. He should have rejected such words as *substance* and *God*, because if they are, by his own confession we know not what they are.

I have already noticed at some length the pains taken by the Westminster Reviewer to establish for Spinoza a religious reputation. Now it is remarkable that though Mr. Lewes will not allow that Spinoza was an atheist, or that his philosophy was not eminently religious, in an after part of the very article in which that declaration of *non-allocation* appears, this writer makes the following extraordinary statement:

We here conclude our exposition of Spinoza's theology—one of the most extraordinary efforts of the speculative faculty which history has revealed to us. We have witnessed the mathematical rigour with which it is developed; we have followed him step by step, dragged onwards by his irresistible logic; and yet the final impression left on our minds is, that the system has a *logical* but not a *vital* truth. We shrink back from the consequences whither it so irresistibly leads us; we gaze over the abyss to the edge of which we have been dragged, and seeing nought but chaos and despair, we refuse to build our temples there.

effects produced upon him by the consequences to which spinosism so irresistibly lead us; yet we have seen that he pretends to think that philosophy, from the consequences of which he *shrinks back*, "most religious." He would fain make us believe that the "God-intoxicated Spinoza" did, by his Godly logic, drag him to the edge of a terrible abyss, where, "seeing nought but chaos and despair," he refused to build his temple. If Spinoza really were "a gross atheist of the D'Holbach school," instead of a "God-intoxicated man," he could not have thrown this reviewer into a more awful state of feeling. I conclude he is himself religious, from the great anxiety he manifests to show that nothing can be more religious than Spinoza's philosophy—but why should the consequences of so religious a philosophy cause him to suffer such agonies? Why should he "shrink back" from them? Why need being "dragged"? Why "Retrace his steps with hurried earnestness, to see if no false route had been taken?"—"To see if there be not some secret error, parent of all other errors?" Why, if not that the system of Spinoza, so far from being a "most religious," is a purely atheistical system? What the author of such a system must have been may be safely guessed. Mr. Lewes says a God-intoxicated—I should guess a God-disgusted man. But though Mr. Lewes said, he could not have meant it, the evidence already adduced seems decisive against his sincerity in this particular.

If the reader keep steadily in view the fundamental difference between spinosism and the cartesian philosophy, he cannot fall a victim to the sophistical inconsistencies of such writers as Mr. Lewes. Des Cartes might have been, and in one sense he unquestionably was, a God-intoxicated man—for he committed the palpable blunder of ranking both extension and thought among substances—whereas Spinoza very properly affirmed that substance is the only existence—the one, unique, and eternal *subject*, of which both *extension* and *thought* were *attributes*. Des Cartes imagined, in fact, that mind and matter were both substances—that though forming together but one, they each enjoyed distinct independent existence. Spinoza, on the other hand, *knew* that "Whatever is, is God" (nature)—that without Him (it) nothing can be conceived—that He (it) is the universal Being (thing) of which all else are the manifestations (phenomena)—that He (it) is the sole substance—everything else is a mode—and that without substance, mode cannot exist. Obviously, therefore, Spinoza could not have believed in a God, unless, indeed, all those who admit the existence of nature, or one "sole substance," are God-believers. If so, the Baron D'Holbach, Baron De Grimm, and other equally "gross atheists," have been most grossly slandered—for except *in terms*, they agree with Spinoza on all vital points. Spinoza rejected Des Cartes' *dicta* about mind and matter being distinct, independent substances—so did they. Spinoza affirmed that both extension and thought were no more than attributes—so did they. Spinoza reduced the duality of Des Cartes, "To his own all-embracing unity, and thus arrived at the conception of the one"—so did they. Spinoza, it is admitted by Mr. Lewes himself, thought that "The absolute existence, the substance (call it what you will) is God." "From Him all individual concrete existences arise;" all that exists, exists in and by God, and can only thus be conceived—they thought "the absolute existence"—the substance (call it what you will) is substance. "From it all individual concrete existences arise—all that exists, exists in and by substance—and can only thus be conceived." Where then, I ask, is the *real* difference between spinosism and atheism? A God with substance for body, and materiality for attribute, is virtually no God at all—yet such a God, we are told, and told, too, by those who hate atheism, was the God of Spinoza—of him that "The Great Spirit of the world penetrated—whose beginning and end was the Infinite—whose only and eternal love was the universe—whose breast was filled with religion and religious feeling—and, therefore, stands alone, unapproachable, the master in his art, but elevated above the profane world, without adherents, and without even citizenship."

\* Schleiermacher: Rede über die Religion; p. 47.

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## LETTERS ON THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

ADDRESSED

TO LORD ASHLEY.

III.

MY LORD.—Since my last letter to your lordship was written, J. A. Roebuck, the member for Bath, has submitted to the House of Commons his promised motion, or rather resolution, concerning the policy of disassociating religion from all national systems of education. That resolution disappointed me—it was not the kind of resolution I had counted upon. Your lordship will remember that in a former letter I credited Mr. Roebuck with the intention to make a motion in the House of Commons, which, if carried, would have pledged that house not to adopt any system of state education save one based on moral doctrines alone, and totally irrespective of any creeds or religion whatever. The resolution, however, lately submitted to the house by Mr. Roebuck, indicates that I credited him with far too much wise intention, as it sets forth that :

In no plan of education, maintained and enforced by the state should any attempt be made to inculcate peculiar opinions, because as such an attempt would be considered a plan for maintaining and strengthening an undue superiority of one sect over another, the animosities and strifes already existing among religious denominations would thereby unhappily be greatly increased, and the cordial co-operation of all sects and denominations, which is absolutely necessary to ensure the success of any plan of public education, rendered impossible.

This is the resolution, which, instead of asserting the principle that no religious opinions should be mixed up with state education, merely deprecates attempts to inculcate under cover of such education any *peculiar* religious opinions—it therefore falls short of what I pointed to as the true mark in my first letter to your lordship.

Strange things were said on both sides of the house, when that resolution was debated. Sir James Graham observed, that the pith of it lay in the word *peculiar*—an observation that tells well for the right honourable baronet's sagacity. He saw that "peculiar" was inserted to save appearances—and, if expunged, would give an entirely new aspect to the resolution. If, instead of declaring, that "In no plan of education enforced by the state, should any attempt be made to inculcate PECULIAR religious opinions," Roebuck had been straightforward enough to declare that, in no plan of education enforced by the state, should any attempt be made to inculcate religious opinions at all—he would have deserved to succeed. For, framed as the resolution was, he failed, and richly deserved to fail. The resolution was rejected by an overwhelming majority—and may all other resolutions share a similar fate, when similar in spirit. Without that "pithy" word peculiar, the resolution is wise and honest, with it, it is dishonest and foolish. Roebuck's object is palpable enough. He evidently desires to throw religion overboard. Why, then, not honestly say as much? Why not take his stand

upon the principle, that no attempt ought to be made by the state to inculcate any religious opinion, *peculiar* or *unpeculiar*? That is an intelligible, a definite, and an admirable principle. Roebuck's resolution should have embodied that principle, not betrayed it. The member for Bath will live to bitterly repent having stooped to truckle or manœuvre when a vital principle was at stake. The treatment his quibbling resolution met with, must convince him that he may easily concede to religious zealots—but cannot hope, except by an entire abandonment of his irreligious policy, ever to conciliate them.

Some portions of the speech by which Mr. Roebuck supported his resolution, were even more worthy of reprobation than the resolution itself. There was something truly contemptible in his begging it to be observed that he was "not endeavouring to get rid of religion, but, on the contrary, to make out a way by which to increase the knowledge and alleviate the miseries of a great portion of the population."

Slips of the tongue are (according to a well-known adage) no faults of the mind—and could I persuade myself that Roebuck's tongue *slipped* when he declared he did not wish "to get rid of religion," I should pass it over—but the member for Bath is not slippery-tongued—he rarely makes *fundamental* mistakes. Few people do. Even the least consistent members of our House of Commons seldom err so grossly. In the hurry of debate, honourable members are often betrayed into the use of inaccurate language, and errors of detail—but they rarely blunder with respect to fundamental propositions. Now this, I conceive, Roebuck did more than once, in the course of his resolutionsary speech. Nevertheless that speech contained some fine points. He told his unwilling listeners, that all he asked of them was to let the state-educated children learn all that is requisite for them to know at the expence of the state, but not to interfere so as to create ill-blood and asperity by teaching religion—but, of course, the honourable house showed little sympathy with such *infidel* sentiments. A majority of that house are country gentlemen, whose nerves are shocked by the idea of education disconnected with *their* holy religion, which cannot, however, much surprise us, if, as Lord John Russell thinks, their brains are made of the same clay as their acres. Country gentlemen, with brains of clay, cannot reasonably be expected to have the clearest imaginable conceptions about educational policy. It is, however, only fair to acknowledge that their deficiency in point of intellect is compensated for by a clamour that never ceases, and a dogged devotion to the interests of that religion, they have contrived to interweave with their own, which never tires. But country gentlemen (as they delight to style themselves) are not the only determined opponents of anything so infidel as merely moral edification, that our House of Commons contains. There is Sir Robert Inglis, who, your lordship knows, is a most furious opponent of non-religious education. He represents in parliament the university of Oxford, and doubtless most fitly represents it. All parties agree in placing a proper value on his truly christian consistency. He never was known to utter a liberal sentiment, or give to freedom a single vote. Oxford is famed throughout the world as the



most bigotted of monkish receptacles—its representative has achieved a renown no less decisive or widely diffused. He commenced his public career the avowed foe to every species of liberty, civil or religious—that he will end it without damaging his present high reputation, I am entirely convinced. It has been said that though we bray a fool in a mortar, he will come out a fool still, and the same holds methinks of bigots, who are indeed a kind of fools, all bigotry being folly. Religious bigotry is second in mischievousness to no other bigotry, and as Sir Robert Inglis is by common consent allowed to be a first-rate religious bigot, why it follows that though by pestle and mortar it would be easy to beat his brains out of his cranium, all the world's pestles and mortars could not beat his bigotry out of his brains. As a matter of course, therefore, when Roebuck submitted his resolution to the house, the bigotted baronet was at his post—and among other remarkable sayings, delivered himself of the following :

I believe there is no worth in any system of education which does not bring out the highest qualities of man connected with his immortal nature and his eternal destinies.

This, my lord, is a fair sample of the bigotted baronet's sack of arguments, in favour of religiously educating all classes of England's population. Such, my lord, are the sentiments which extensively prevail—which are vociferously cheered by our "white waistcoated" legislators, and received at public meetings with peals of applause. For all perishable things Sir Robert Inglis has a truly pious contempt. The immortal and the eternal is that to which all his aspirations tend. His "steep aim," though very "Titan like," is certainly not

On daring doubts to pile  
Thoughts which should call down thunder and the flame,

but to connect mortal systems of education with immortal natures, and eternal destinies.

Now, my lord, though this species of *fanfarronade* may be suitable enough to swell a romance, and, perhaps, occasionally serve "to point a moral, or adorn a tale," I certainly deem it odd sort of stuff to mix up with educational systems. Educational systems should be founded upon well digested knowledge of mortal natures and fleeting destinies—seeing that we cannot even conceive of any other. Human knowledge of the inconceivable is remarkably sparing. Like mathematical points, it can only be discovered by the eye of imagination, and hardly that. Sir Robert Inglis has established a reputation for clear-sightedness. He is certainly an almost *clairvoyant* christian. He can see the immortal even more clearly than the mortal. The interest of the true church, to wit, he never was known to lose sight of for an instant. Not only of its spiritual but material interests is he the watchful guardian. There is one sort of thing he cannot see, and that is church abuses. Its uses no man sees more clearly, to its abuses he is blinder than moles. According to Edmund Burke, church abuses if not venerable, are at least hoary—but though Sir Robert Inglis has such "a quick eye to see" its interests, he has never been able to catch a glimpse of its abuses, hoary as they are. Such a man, my lord, cannot be expected to oppose any measures likely to swell church influence, or sanction any scheme of education likely to de-religionise the people, and thereby render them independent of the clergy. Sir Robert Inglis knows that the church of England would cease to be a church in less than half a century from the passing of a bill rendering it imperative upon the state to provide secular, *without* religious, instruction for the poor. Every one understands that the church of England cannot do without state aid. To throw that church upon its own resources, would be to destroy it. Sir Robert Inglis himself agrees with me upon that point—which is, I believe, the only point with respect to which we do agree. Yes, yes, the bigotted baronet has an eye to the mortal as well as immortal—his ardent affection for the immortal and the eternal, never causing him entirely to overlook the human and the perishable. His desire is to see a thoroughly christian education given to the poor of these realms—an education so thoroughly and exclusively religious, as to shut out all science. He will lend the light of his christian countenance to no plan which will not bring out the highest qualities of man, *connected* with his immortal nature and eternal destinies—but it is peculiarly unfortunate for

this most heavenly theory of education, that the wisest know absolutely nothing about either immortal natures or eternal destinies. It is, therefore, sheer blockheadism to talk about them.

My lord, everything is eternal, and every thing "smells of mortality." In the very same sense, and no other, that worms have an eternal destiny, has man. Myriads of insects are the creatures of an hour: man is the creature of many hours: but he surely ends his course as the meanest insects do *theirs*. Forms are mutable—being and change are the only eternals. Dust crumbles to dust, whether such dust assume the human or any other form. "The noble dust of Alexander" may be traced, by imagination, "stopping a bung-hole."

Imperial Cæsar dead and turned to clay,  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;  
On that that earth which kept the world in awe,  
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

Sir Robert Inglis and other sages of the *know-more-than-all* school have one peculiarity given by ancient poets to departed spirits. Those poets fabled that departed spirits know things past and to come, yet are strangely ignorant of many things present; as Agamemnon who foretels what should happen to Ulysses, yet innocently inquires what has become of his own son. Now, my lord, it is not I hope too much to say that christians in general, and particularly Sir Robert Inglis, are uncommonly like these "departed spirits." Only observe how familiar he affects to be with the immortal past and immortal to come, although so astonishingly ignorant of all present mortal things save and except only those things which concern the church. Indeed, my lord, I am fully persuaded that the pious member for Oxford University is far better qualified to legislate for eternity than time, for immortal than mortal nature, for people long past than people now present.

But surely, my lord, it is not wise to mix up in a system of education intended to be nationally applicable, questions about *imaginary* immortal destinies and *fancied* immortalities. The eternal and the immortal can only be understood by, as most assuredly, they can only concern, the eternal and immortal. When men find themselves the one or the other they will have time enough to congratulate themselves thereupon, and make the best of their good fortune. When rationalised a little, they will find ample employment for their prodigious faculties, in what "comes home to their business and bosoms," in a word, *nature*, that everlasting source as well as recipient of all living things.

Sir James Graham, who on the part of the government resisted Roebuck's resolution, spoke in a strain of most exalted piety. Indeed, my lord, these two worthy baronets, I mean of course, Sir Robert Inglis and Sir James Graham, are the most efficient supporters of Christ and his kingdom that our present House of Commons can boast. Sylvester, when describing "the Lord coming to judgment," expresses himself thus :

Mercy and justice, marching cheek by jowl,  
Shall his divine, triumphant chariot roll.

But instead of "merry and justice," had Sylvester been a prophet, he would have said :

Graham and Inglis, marching cheek by jowl,  
Shall his divine, triumphant chariot roll.

For most triumphantly are those two worthy politicians rolling it, that is, if Christ's church may be likened to "his divine triumphant chariot," which I presume it orthodoxly may. Yes my lord, Sir James Graham and his *cheek by jowl* companion are exerting themselves "gloriously" in the work of "making arrangements for general confusion" in church and educational matters. Sir James Graham's reply to Roebuck has been lauded as "statesman-like and eminently religious in its tone." The term statesman-like is of meaning so doubtful that a speech thus called is perhaps not left-handedly complimented. That the speech in question *was* religious in its tone, the following extract perfectly establishes :

I admit the primary importance of the sanction of domestic and religious education, to which the honorable and learned gentleman (Roebuck) has alluded. The honourable and learned gentleman said that religion was one of those sanctions: I, with deference, consider it the first and most important principle of all: and although this country at this moment is distracted by the heat of religious dissension, yet I do believe that upon

the great cardinal point there is a strong and almost universal concurrence of feeling that education to be sound and to be safe must be based on scriptural knowledge.

Here my lord, we have the opinion of a public functionary upon whom devolves some of the important duties of legislation. He tells us that national education to be sound and safe must be based on scriptural knowledge. Now we know that scriptural knowledge is contained in a book vulgarly called the bible; a book whose origin is doubtful, whose contents are a riddle, whose use is a mystery, and whose abuse is no mystery; a book that Mr Shiel declared in the very teeth of Sir James Graham, "The catholics objected to the indiscriminate perusal of, first, on the ground that the old testament contained the records of a carnal people, and next, because there were passages in the new testament, and more especially in St. Paul, which were difficult to be understood, and required the intervention of an interpreter." Strange book this methinks, whereon to base a sound system of education. A plain, unlettered man if at the same time unchristianised, and capacitated to seize the idea conveyed by that word *principle*, would to a certainty at once conclude that the principles of education should be stable principles; that its details should be clear, precise and comprehensive; but Sir James Graham, I presume, is of a different opinion—for where are the stable scriptural principles? in what page of the bible are we to look for principles of nature, and in which of its chapters may information be obtained as to clear, precise and comprehensive educational details? The bible contains details in abundance, but they are details which concern a "carnal people," a people remarkable only for their credulity, intolerance, superstition, and thirst of blood. What could such a people have known about sound educational principles and details? What could such a people have known about the science of education, that science of all others the most difficult to master? Verily, my lord, the mental condition of christendom must be deplorably low, when it condescends to borrow its educational principle and practice from a four-thousand-year old race of idolatrous fanatics. I maintain, my lord, that the present generation disgraces itself by a slavish adherence to the musty records of such a race. The catholic priests do well in objecting to the indiscriminate perusal of the bible; experience having proved that its indiscriminate perusal has a far greater tendency to produce than to cure demoralisation. But, my lord, it becomes a question for grave consideration, whether a book, which those who believe it God's book think is not fit to be perused indiscriminately, is fit to form the basis of any educational system? There are many books with no pretensions to sacredness, which, nevertheless, may be read by all, and understood, too, by all, without corrupting any; but according to the admissions of christian priests themselves, the bible is not such a book. They plainly tell us, they object to its indiscriminate perusal because "it is the record of a carnal people," and yet our Grahams and Ingleses would fain make us believe that these very records are the only sure ground whereon to raise a sound educational superstructure. Really, my lord, biblical cant, or rather cant about the bible, is at once the most contemptible, disgusting, and vitiating of all cant. The people will see it to be so, sooner or later, and when they do, they will no longer consent to be victimised by the wholesale traders in such scandalous humbug. It is the business of those who govern to gull the governed; then, surely, my lord, it ought to be the governed's business to take care that they are not gulled. It is related of George Frederick Cooke, the celebrated actor, that upon a certain occasion when he had so admirably enacted the crooked-back tyrant Glo'ster, as to draw down a complete storm of applause from his delighted audience, he said, after leaving the stage, "Done 'em again, by God." Now, my lord, I have not a vestige of doubt that some of our "pious," eminently religious statesmen, after acting some favourite religious character in the House of Commons, for which they receive repeated rounds of applause, hear hears, cheers, great cheers, immense cheers, &c., do chuckle to themselves, "Done 'em again, by God."

It is greatly to be lamented that statesmen so often find it expedient to deceive the people. Manifest and most grievous are the errors and vices originating in state duplicity. Your lordship could, if you would, bear ample testimony to the truth of that assertion. Your experience must teach you how little to be relied on are the words of statesmen, who are educated to deceive their fellow men. Sir James Graham is a

statesman of the expediency tribe, who is skilful to "make the worse appear the better reason," if politic to do so; and is prepared to set up or knock down religions, to assert their truth or demonstrate their falsehood, according to circumstances. It is a remarkable fact that the most pious of England's statesmen have been the worst. Nothing could exceed the piety of Lord Sidmouth or Castlereagh. Their profound respect for "our holy christian religion," and "divine providence," no one could be ignorant of, as they rarely opened their pious mouths without descending upon those awful subjects. The more tyrannical their measures, the more necessary they deemed it to religionise and divine-providenceise their speeches. A mortal stab at human liberty was invariably preceded by long homilies about the inestimable blessings conferred on humanity by the christian religion. They would have been horrified at the idea of educating the poorer classes of society upon any other than purely religious principles. They had no objection to demoralise, but they would never have consented to dereligionise the people. Their welfare in time, they were heedless about; it being only their eternal welfare about which they were so sensitive. Lord Eldon, in a speech of eleven hours and a half, laboured to bring home to Thelwall, Hardy, and other patriots a charge of constructive treason, or rather to construct treason, for the construction of which they might have been legally hanged, drawn, and quartered; but, nevertheless, he was an eminently religious statesman, the pink of piety, who would have resisted to the death any attempt to educate the people without reference to religious creeds and bombast; though not objecting in the least, if politically expedient, to make our scaffolds reek with the blood of patriots. Yes, my lord, the most atrociously villainous of our statesmen, have uniformly made the largest pretensions to religious sanctity, and zeal for our law-established church. I do not say that Sir James Graham is a Castlereagh, a Sidmouth or an Eldon, but he is unquestionably a religious statesman; one of their good old tory school. No marvel, therefore, that he cants and whines about "Inculcating religious opinions, and sound as well as safe systems of education, based on scriptural knowledge." No marvel that he is deeply impressed with "The political uses of religion, and thoroughly convinced that no effectual restraint over the passions of men could be obtained by merely human law; and that entire control could be effected only by laws which were warranted by divine sanction."

But though this may be Sir James Graham's opinion, it is certainly not mine. The political uses of religion, no one can doubt. They are of a nature to convince the most sceptical. They are seen in the degradation of the people. Did they cease to be religious they would cease to be slaves. The political use of religion has hitherto been to make the people willing forgers of their own fetters—willing victims of ruthless oligarchies. Yes, my lord, the political uses of religion are well understood. The present generation acutely feels the uses of religion. To do religion justice, it has been an effectual restraint over the passion for liberty natural to man. That passion it has effectually checked, nay, almost extinguished. It cannot be denied that divine law has effected this purpose better than it could have been effected by laws merely human. Once convince a people that certain laws "were warranted by divine sanction," and whether such laws be the best or the worst, is of little consequence as regards their reception. The individual who is persuaded that a God sanctioned the laws by which he is governed, will never cease to reverence, or hesitate to obey them. He can only hesitate to obey and reverence them, when he is sceptical about their divinity.

I am, with all due respect,

Your lordship's well wisher,  
C. SOUTHWELL.

## THE COMPARATIVE RATIONALITY OF THEISM AND ATHEISM.

IV.

DOES any one for a moment doubt his immortality? Enter into no physical or metaphysical argument respecting it, but cure the fell disease by yielding up thyself to its powerful in-



fluence. Let the *horrid* thought take full possession. Carry it out to its remotest consequences. Give to it its most universal application. Think of the thousands of other worlds peopled with beings like our own, and presenting the same inexplicable moral enigma. Look upon the heavens as they are mightily spread above thee, and think of the domain of annihilating death extending thus through all space, and through everlasting time. Think of the misery which has been endured, and that we have in nature, or the mere *God of nature*, no security that it may not be increased beyond the utmost power of the imagination. Think of the indifferent intelligence, or the relentless physical power which through an eternal succession of productions may be sporting with the ephemeral beings it is ever calling forth. Muse upon the unmeaningness of science, the emptiness of philosophy, the death of poetry, the futility of all moral distinctions, the inexplicable enigma of human life—and the soul will come back to a firmer belief in a God and revelation than could have been produced by all historical evidence, or all the inductions of the natural sciences.

Such is the style of reasoning adopted by certain theists whose fundamental axiom is, that "a feeling of our moral wants becomes the true support of the believing spirit," and of course relinquish, as altogether untenable, the positions our Clarke, Paley, Ellises, and Leslies laboured so hard to make impregnable. This class of theists, appealing to *sentiment* in proof of God's existence and revelation's truth, will not admit the validness of any other authority. They deny that the truth of the one or the existence of the other can be made apparent or proved reasonable by reference to historical evidence, to natural evidence, or, indeed, *any* evidence. They reject intellect as an insufficient guide in our search for information concerning the *sacred* and *unnatural*. It is "the intense longing for something higher," "The state of soul which struggles to believe, which can find *nothing* in science or philosophy that can satisfy the unearthly craving, and feels that faith of some kind is the very element in which it lives, and that deprived of this, it languishes and dies an eternal death—it is all this, and not mere intellect, can make us wise unto salvation." Theists of this sentimental complexion confidently assure us that to searchers after God, and his so called revelation, *out* of this state, difficulties insurmountable present themselves on every side—but when *in* this struggling, intensely longing, anti-scientific, and philosophic state, the path leading to conviction of God's actuality, as well as the truth of his divine word, is smooth and short. In such a state of dissatisfaction the earthly, as they deem external, objections to the bible and existence of its divine author, vanish into nothingness, and those difficulties which so much perplex other less sentimental individuals, present trifling obstacles. In answer to the question "What are the proofs of God's existence?" Origen Bacheleer replied, "The universe—everything. There's not an insect, not a blade of grass, but displays omnipotence and omniscience, much more does the great whole." A reply quite satisfactory to a considerable number of theists, but by no means satisfactory to *all* of them. Theists of the sentimental school, people who believe in a God, not because the universe furnishes evidence of his existence, but only because they have "longed and struggled to believe in him," cannot agree with Mr. Bacheleer. He declares that the "universe everything" proves God's existence—they declare we should believe in God, not by induction from evidences of design in the external creation. He declares that the question is not whether we *know* that there is a God, but whether, on the whole, there is reason to believe in one? They distinctly assure us it is not reason, but a voice within that proclaims the existence of something more than nature. Bacheleer evidently considers the human intellect competent to decide whether there is a God or not. There is or is not a God (such are his words), and it is not supposable that, in a case of this nature, there is equal reason for believing either the wrong or the right side; whereas, sentimental theists scout the idea of *intellectual* belief in a God or his scriptures. The believing spirit, say they, has its seat in the moral rather than the intellectual world—while the believing spirit, according to Bacheleer, is a natural product of well disciplined intellect. Strange are the differences among theists—not trivial, but radical, differences. If I turn to the writings of Taylor Lewis, I find reason renounced and denounced. I find the God-question treated as one entirely beyond the range of intellect, though not of feeling. I find sentiment appealed to as the only infallible witness that "God

is, and that he is a rewarder of all those who diligently seek him." If I turn to the writings of Hall, Horne, Leslie, Bacheleer, or other unsentimental divines, I find the *reasonableness* of belief in one only and eternal God uniformly insisted upon. Verily, an honest investigator cannot fail to be sadly puzzled by these spiritual doctors.

The practice of appealing to sentiment when reason has been tried and found wanting, is by no means a novel mode. Sophists and theosophists have in all ages found it very convenient. Nitsch, in his "General and Introductory View of Kant's Principles, concerning Man, the World, and the Deity," remarks that Professor Kant was decidedly of opinion, that although many strong and ingenious arguments have been brought forward in favour of the will: they are yet very far from being decisive. Nor have the arguments urged by necessitarians any influence but by an appeal to mere feeling, which on such questions is of no avail.

Reinhold, too, another countryman of Kant's; observes that "Practical reason is a wing which Kant prudently added to his edifice, from a sense of the inadequacy of the original design to answer the intended purpose. It bears a manifest resemblance to what some philosophers call an *appeal to sentiment*, founding belief on the necessity of acting. Whatever contempt (continues Mr. Reinhold) Kant may affect for popular systems of philosophy; this manner of considering the subject, is not unlike that of those, who feeling their inability to obtain by the exercise of their reason a direct conviction of their religious creed, cling to it, nevertheless, with blind, eagerness as a support essential to their morals and happiness."

These authors' reflections are intrinsically valuable, and show that the practice of drawing arbitrary distinctions between *feeling* and *reason*, and flying to the former when the latter cannot be appealed to with good effect, is by no means novel. But the trick is despicable as it is foolish. It is foolish, because we know absolutely nothing about moral nature in contradistinction to intellectual nature, or conversely of intellectual nature in contradistinction to moral nature. We know only of one nature, though numberless are the modes by which and in which that nature operates. All sets out from unity, and all returns to unity. The universe is one from the fact of being a universe. A man is one, from the fact of being a man. Universal phenomena result from universal unity, as human phenomena from human unity. Man is the recipient of sensations. Sensations infinite in number, infinite in variety, and infinite in relations, constitute that aggregate of phenomena called sometimes mental, sometimes intellect, sometimes sentiment, sometimes feeling, sometimes faith, sometimes reason, sometimes passion, and sometimes something else; but as all the varied phenomena represented by those words are *one* in their origin, so are they *one* in their nature. Many of these words, however, are altogether useless, or worse than useless, as they often hinder us from attaining clear ideas of general phenomena. Robinet, in his work "De la Nature," speaking of the intellect, expresses it by oval fibres, of memory—by indulated or spiral fibres, of will—by fretted fibres, of pleasure—and pain by bundles of sensibility—a mode of expression no less objectionable than fanciful—but, in truth, it is much easier to detect flaws in the expressions of others, than to mend our own. Nevertheless, I must here attempt to show that it is wrong to speak of the moral feelings as distinct from the intellectual faculties.

Taylor Lewis tells me that the believing spirit has its seat in the moral nature rather than the intellectual, from which I infer that he considered the moral nature of man *different* if not *apart* from his intellectual nature. But what is the fact? The line between these two natures, supposing there to be two natures, cannot be drawn. Their differences, if they exist, are non-discoverable. The moral man evidently includes the intellectual man. Indeed, *moral* is a word which can only be properly applied to *conduct*. It is right to say of a useful line of conduct, it is moral; and of a pernicious line of conduct, it is immoral—but the words moral and immoral should not be used in any other sense. A man's conduct is contingent upon the peculiarities of his individual organism and the character of circumstances, which incessantly act upon it. Action begets reaction. Circumstances act upon individual organisms, and individual organisms react upon circumstances—their joint result is *character*, which is moral when the producing agents are moral, and conversely immoral when the producing agents are immoral. There can be no moral where there is no intellectual nature, though the facul-

ties called intellectual are sometimes exceedingly strong when the individual disposition is immoral. The leading object of such theists as Taylor Lewis, manifestly is to make it appear there may be a conviction independently of intellectual action. The unavoidable inference from their reasoning is, that we may arrive at a belief in God's existence by an exercise of our moral nature; or, rather, that it is only through our moral nature such belief can ever be arrived at. Now the word moral is unfitly applied to a nature of any kind. It is a term properly relative to the action of a nature, not nature itself. We might just as philosophically speak of our sensitive nature in contradistinction to our intellectual nature, as of our intellectual nature in contradistinction to our moral nature. Intellect is a word expressive of certain faculties men have agreed to call mental. Morality is a word expressive of certain conduct men have agreed to call good. But conduct is not a faculty, but an exercise of faculties. Does any one doubt his immortality says Taylor Lewis, let him enter into no physical or metaphysical arguments respecting it, but cure the fell disease by yielding up himself to its most powerful influence. Well, suppose we grant the wisdom of considering doubt with respect to immortal destinies a fell disease—suppose we conclude with him that we should make no attempt to convince ourselves by arguments physical or metaphysical—is it not obvious that we could not thus consider or conclude without exercising our intellectual faculties? The act of thinking is surely an intellectual act, and how, save by processes of thought, can we arrive at any *conclusions*, or *consider* in any manner whatever. The act of considering is an intellectual act, so is the act of concluding, yet would these theists persuade us that "The believing spirit has its seat in the moral nature rather than the intellectual." There are thousands of sceptically inclined christians who "struggle to believe," who feel an "intense longing for something higher," as they call it, who can find "*Nothing in science or philosophy* that can satisfy the unearthly craving"—but are we to be told that those who do so are in a moral, not an intellectual, state? I call such struggling and longing, and contempt for science and philosophy disgracefully immoral, but were it allowed to be perfectly moral, still it is a species of action no individual would adopt, unless his or her intellect had been wrought up to a conviction of its propriety. Even the religious enthusiast, he who is convinced that faith in the incomprehensible and immortal is the one necessary element without which all is vanity, ending in eternal death, can only have arrived at that conviction by the exercise of his intellectual faculties. Nothing can be more absurd than to talk about a moral nature at all, except the attempt to make it appear that the "believing spirit has its seat there." A man cannot believe without brains—that I take to be an established fact. He cannot think without using his intellects, in other words, he cannot think without thinking—that is another established fact. He cannot feel without thinking, think without feeling—that is another established fact. He cannot feel without knowing he feels, because to feel without knowing we feel, is not to feel at all—that is another established fact. He cannot feel without organs of sense, as it is only by means of those organs sensation can be experienced—that also is an established fact.

Now I do not see what other conclusion these established facts justify, if not the conclusion that all *vital* phenomena, let men call those phenomena what names they may, *begin* with sensations, *end* with sensations, and are sensations. Life is evidently nothing more than a series of sensations. Thinking is living. One kind of sensations men have agreed to call *moral feelings*—another kind they have agreed to call *physical propensities*—a third kind they have agreed to call *intellectual faculties*, but call them what we may, they are *sensations* still. Sleep has been called "death's brother," and aptly so—because in sound sleep sensation ceases—now death is the soundest of all sleeps. "When we have shuffled off this mortal coil," dreams *may* come—but there are certainly *no facts* whereon to raise the conclusion, that any individual organisms will have one little more sense of existence, after the work of decomposition is accomplished, than they had before they were composed. The *longers* and *strugglers* after immortality tell us they *know* we are immortal creatures—but unluckily we have only their bare word for it. Their "believing spirit" does not soil itself by contact with facts—which is unfortunate, as the dreamery that spirit occasionally gives birth to is very pleasant, and only makes one regret it is not *very* likely to be realised. But whatever may happen

after death, it is certain that while *living* we *feel*, and while *feeling* we *think*—*ideas*, *propensities*, *intellectual faculties*, *feelings*, &c., being nothing more than certain well-known kinds of sensibility. Some philosophers, as Gassendi, have called ideas "transformed sensations," but *complex* would, perhaps, be a better word than *transformed*, if used in relation to *sensations*. Of *simple* and *complex* sensation, I have a distinct conception, but the words *transformed* or *changed* sensations are open to objection.

These reflections have a direct and important bearing upon the question of God's existence. For if all our propensities, feelings, and intellectual faculties begin and end with sensation—and if sensation itself is produced in us by an action of external things, it follows that sentimental theists, who so confidently tell us "Nature alone cannot prove the existence of a God," are in error, as, in point of fact, a denial that nature can prove the existence of God, amounts to a denial of God's being—a denial quite out of all character on the part of sentimental theists. So far, therefore, are these sentimental theosophists from exposing the absurdity of non-b-lief in God, that they have much helped, by their purely clerical distinction between "moral and intellectual nature," to spread and strengthen such non-belief.

The authority of Plato is often cited by them in justification of their preposterous notions about "a believing spirit," whose deep-felt *craving* after the inconceivable, *shuts up* the soul to faith, as the very life of its beings. It appears that Plato clearly perceived the radical difference of opinions among men, as to this matter of belief. He tells us of two classes directly opposed to each other. Between whom, he observes, there has ever been a strife respecting what constitutes *being* and *reality*, as fierce as the ancient wars of the giants and his gods. "The one class are ever drawing down all things from heaven and the invisible world, as though grasping, Titan like, in their hands, rocks and oaks. Whatever presents touch and resistance, they affirm alone exists, defining *body* and *being* as the same, and utterly despising all who think otherwise. The other class affect familiar acquaintance with the *invisible region*, strongly asserting that the unintelligible and the immaterial are the *only* things entitled to the epithet *reality*."

Taylor Lewis, who quoted these sayings of Plato, in his famous "Discourse," delivered some years since before the New Hampshire "Alpha of Phi Beta Happa Society," thus reflects thereon:

All ages have confirmed the truth of this (Plato's) description. There have always been men who wished to draw down all things from heaven to earth, from the invisible to the visible, from the ideal to the phenomenal, from the spiritual to the sensible. In nature, they find only second causes. "All things with them continue as they were since the creation," and the creation itself is put back to a period in imagination so remote, that although the speculative truth may be saved, the practical influences upon the mind are all that atheism could desire. In history, they find no place for supernatural interpositions. In the interpretation of the scriptures, should peculiar circumstances place them in the hands of such men, everything is spiritualised—the natural appears everywhere—the spiritual, the supernatural, is kept as much as possible out of view, or shunned as if the very thought gave rise to painful associations.

The whole of this paragraph is worse than nonsensical—it is false. It contains almost as many fallacies as lines. To correct it would be impossible, as, like the Irishman's coat, it can only be *mended* by a *new one*. It is really marvellous that a professor of Greek, in the New York University, should so far commit himself as to pen such balderdash. Though, to be sure, experience proves that learned simpletons are the veriest of all simpletons. Professor Taylor is evidently a "most learned" simpleton. This is the most charitable view to take—for if not exceedingly *simple*, he is excessively *dishonest*. He knows, or ought to know, that materialists, the class of men to whom his observations were meant to apply, so far from wishing to draw down all things from heaven to earth, from the invisible to the visible, from the ideal to the phenomenal, from the spiritual to the sensible, make no pretensions to an acquaintance either with heaven, the invisible, the ideal, or the spiritual, in the sense attached to those terms by him. He knows, or ought to know, that materialists do not admit a creation, and therefore it is *libellous* to say, "All things with them continue as they were since the creation"—it is *libellous* to declare that they put back *creation* to a period in imagination so remote, &c. Those who think creation an impossibility, cannot surely be charged with thinking the universe was created at any period, near or remote. Now, materialists do maintain that



creation is an impossibility. To them, "the natural does appear everywhere—not can they comprehend how the unnatural can appear anywhere." Unspiritualisers they most undoubtedly are—unnaturalists as unquestionably. So far, professor Taylor is right, and no farther. The rest of his paragraph is mere blundering folly—a lame and impotent attempt to fasten upon materialists the *credit* of entertaining opinions they are unceasingly protesting against.

## SOCIALIST BOOKS AND SOCIALIST DOCTRINE.

*To the Editor of the Investigator.*

SIR.—No. 5 of THE INVESTIGATOR contained an article on "Socialist Books and Socialist Doctrine," with the philosophy of which I disagree. Thinking that many individuals of the social body might entertain similar views with myself, and knowing there to be many members of that body possessed of high literary talent, and great logical acumen, I expected ere this to have found some one amongst them attempt a refutation of the errors which I conceive are contained in the article I have named. Having waited a reasonable time, and finding no realisation of my anticipations, I am induced to offer a few remarks of my own—not being content that the inference should lie, that your arguments being unanswered, they are, therefore, unanswerable.

You say, that socialist opinions have, to your "Certain knowledge, suffered infinitely more from injudicious friends than from their open and bitterest enemies." This I can readily believe, from my own experience, and it is the fate, more or less, of all opinions. A fear of doing like mischief to the cause which I espouse would have kept me silent upon the present occasion, but that the hope of being more successful has preponderated. At any rate, by giving a reason for the faith that is within me, I offer the best proof of my readiness to renounce my errors whenever better reasons are produced for my acceptance.

Your objections are levelled against what I conceive to be the fundamental principle of socialism, namely, that "The character of man is formed *for* him and *NOT* by him." You say, in reference to this question, "I cannot but think it a very silly sentence, nay, more than silly, it is *positively false*, and most unquestionably has been 'a stone of stumbling and rock of offence' to thousands of intelligent, truth-seeking individuals." You then proceed:

In an "Outline of the Rational System," drawn up, I believe, by Robert Owen, it is laid down as "fundamental principle," that "Man is a compound being, formed of his organisation at birth, and the effects of external circumstances acting upon that organisation from birth to death; such organisation and external circumstances acting and reacting each upon the other." Clearly, therefore, according to this "fundamental principle," the compound being or organisation is the *man*, at every period of its existence. We are properly told above that the organisation, in other words, the *man*, and circumstances, continually act and react each upon the other. How then can it be asserted by the holders of such doctrine, that the *man* does not play a part, *aye*, and an important part too, in the formation of his own character? How, in the same of wonder, can any creature that necessarily and necessarily plays a part in the work of its own modification, have its character formed *for* and *not* by it? How monstrously absurd is such doctrine from the mouths of those very people who assure us, that if circumstances act upon organisation, organisation reacts upon circumstances; in other words, if man is modified *by*, he is also the modifier of circumstances?

Now, sir, with all due deference to your more ripened judgment, I would submit that your error, if error it be, lies in this—that you have taken too narrow a view of the subject. I think I can show from quotations from your own writings, that you have frequently yourself disproved the position you have endeavoured to sustain in No. 5—and that, moreover, you overlooked in the after part of this same article the arguments you advanced at the beginning.

You would seem to agree with Robert Owen, that "Man is a compound being, formed of his organisation at birth, and the effects of external circumstances acting upon that organisation from birth to death; such organisation and external circumstances acting and reacting each upon the other." Although, I say, you would seem to agree with this, you appear, at the same time, to forget that the original organisation at birth is the circumstance which subsequently modifies all circumstances, subsequent to birth, by which such original organisation may be surrounded—and, also, that the extent of the

influence which external circumstances can produce upon the original organisation, must depend upon the original constitution of that organisation. In short, you seem to forget that it entirely depends upon the original organisation for what general character shall be produced. The "compound being," man, spoken of by Robert Owen, is formed of the original organisation at birth, "and the effects of external circumstances upon that organisation."

Clearly, as I take it, at the moment of birth, man has not played any part in the formation of his own character. It is not until some time after birth, when ideas have been accumulated, and man begins to reason, that he can be truly said to take any direct part in the formation of his own character. However early after birth we may agree to consider the time when man first begins to reason and determine what he shall do and what he shall not do, we have yet the fact indisputable, that up to that time he was perfectly quiescent, and totally unable to take any part in the formation of his own character. During the formation of the fœtus in the womb, the human embryo has no power to alter any of the circumstances by which it is surrounded and to which it is subject—and the general character which a man shall receive, or give to, himself, subsequent to birth, must depend entirely upon the organisation he shall receive from his parents previously to birth. A human being born with a malformed brain, such as we designate an idiot, would never be able to form for himself, or to have formed for him, such a character as that of Newton, Voltaire, Gibbon, or Rousseau, though surrounded with every favourable circumstance—not would any one of these illustrious men, though placed in circumstances far more unfavourable than those by which they were surrounded, have been idiots.

Physiologists are of opinion that the fœtus is entirely devoid of sensation and voluntary motion, and that it is not until after birth that an important portion of the animal economy—the nervous—takes any part in the formation of the animal's character. Dr. Thomas Jameson, in his "Essays on the Changes of the Human Body," says, p. 51, "The confined situation of the fœtus, excluded from all kind of communication with the external world, and the tardy process of forming a nervous system, preclude the functions of sensation and voluntary motion. There can be no feeling in utero, where there is no consciousness. We might as well ascribe sensibility to a decapitated body, as to the child in utero; for which reason we find that the child dies in the womb, without the knowledge of the mother, and without a struggle or expression of pain, when wounded with instruments in laborious parturition. An elegant author (Dr. Osborn) met with considerable opposition when he first promulgated the opinion, now generally believed, that the fœtus is totally devoid of sensation in the uterus." It must, then, be evident, that whatever power or influence man may exercise over circumstances—or whatever part he may play in the formation of his own character, subsequent to birth, having no control over his original organisation, which organisation determines his general character, he is entirely the creature of circumstances, viewed as a whole—justifying, in its widest and philosophical sense, the assertion, "The character of man is formed for him, and *not* by him."

Professor Babbage, in his "Bridgewater Treatise, a Fragment," says, that "The track of every canoe, of every vessel which has yet disturbed the surface of the ocean, whether impelled by manual force or elemental power, remains for ever registered in the future movement of all succeeding particles which may occupy its place. The furrow which it left is, indeed, instantly filled up by the closing waters; but they draw after them other and larger portions of the surrounding element, and these again once moved, communicate motion to others in endless succession"—but the ocean itself, as the original circumstance acted upon, determined or controlled the effect produced by the passage of the first canoe upon its surface, and also every subsequent effect. As with the ocean, so with man, to whatever influences his original organisation may be subjected, the effects produced upon that organisation must be contingent upon the capabilities of the organisation to receive or reject the influences brought to bear upon it—for, as Spinoza says, "Substance [in my case, the original organisation] is prior to its accidents."

You say in No. 3, article "Morals," that metaphysicians may "create any mind they please *through* the body"—admitting, as I take it, that the body is the substratum or foundation for the mental character. I have shown that the

original body is formed for man—and you say that any mind may be formed for him likewise. The body and the mind form the totality of a man's character. I understand the assertion *any sort of mind with limitations*—not supposing you to mean that an idiot may be made a Laplace, a blind man a Herschel, or a dumb man a Demosthenes—but that upon a sound physical structure, a sound, or moral, structure may be raised, or an unsound, or immoral, one.

In your article in No. 5, you say, "Man in every stage of his existence is a result"—how can you reconcile this with the opinion that man's character is formed by him as well as for him? Again you say, in the same article:

The principles of socialism, as well economic as moral, I deem perfectly defensible. Its morality is based upon the fact that man is, in every sense, a production of nature, no less than shrubs or hailstones—that, like all other actual existences, he is material, and the mental phenomena he exhibits are results, necessary results, of matter's action—that man is the body and the body the man—that what are popularly called "sensibilities, intellectual powers, animal propensities, moral feelings," &c., are nothing more than the various and ever-varying effects or phenomena caused by the human structure acted upon, and acting upon, the parts of nature with which it is immediately in contact. Man is just as much the creature of an invincible necessity as any other animal.

With this I entirely agree. Man is, I conceive, "the creature of an invincible necessity." Though, viewed relatively, he does play a part in the formation of his own character, inasmuch as he creates circumstances which react upon himself—still, viewed generally, I cannot but think him entirely the creature of circumstances, or of "invincible necessity." Towards the end you say:

All were *unborn*—all know there was a time when they were not, or rather when they had no sense of existence—all know they sought not to be born. When we were born, how we were born, where we were born, depended in no wise upon us. Nor did it in anywise depend upon any will of ours whether we should be soundly or unsoundly organised—be brought forth in a hovel or a palace—amid the very best or very worst circumstances—and yet, is it not evident that our whole character at this moment is the joint result of original structure and ever fluctuating circumstances? Man is, it can scarce be too oft repeated, an effect, and like all other effects, the mere consequent of inevitable antecedents.

"When we were born, where we were born, depended in no wise upon us. Nor did it in anywise depend upon any will of ours whether we should be soundly or unsoundly organised—be brought forth in a hovel or a palace—amid the very best or the very worst of circumstances." Granted. But I have shown that man's general character materially depends upon his being "soundly or unsoundly organised" at birth. You say, "Man is, it can scarce be too often repeated, an effect, and like all other effects, the mere consequent of inevitable antecedents." If then he be wholly and entirely an effect, how can he likewise be an independent cause? All the phenomena in the universe are effects—man's original organisation is an effect, and man's character subsequent to birth is an effect, also, consequent upon his original organisation and surrounding circumstances—proving him to be, as a whole, an effect—for undoubtedly he does not form an exception to a general rule.

Again, if man does form his own character, in the arbitrary sense you would seem to imply that he does, he must have a *free will*. If he has not a free will, the character which may result from any of his actions is formed for him and in spite of him, and not by him. The will or desire is as much beyond the control of the particular organisation which is the subject of it, after birth, as was the form and nature of the organisation beyond the control of itself when in the uterus.

There is yet one more point to which I would allude, namely, the *instinctive feelings*, which form a part of man's nature, as they do of every other animal's. These feelings are inseparable from existence, and upon the gratification of them life depends. I am indebted for this idea to your "Why and Because," in No. 78 of the "Oracle of Reason," wherein you say, that the instinct is natural, as animals "Have it anterior to all experience, while reason is an acquirement, and therefore artificial." Now, it is well known, that the peculiar dispositions or temperaments, as they are called, which are born with men predetermine the subsequent characters which shall be given to them. Where, the fact of the animal, or instinctive, feelings being inseparable from life is granted—it must, I think, be evident, that any character, based upon those instincts is a result, and as much independent of the control of the possessor, as were the instincts which form so important a part of it.

There is not a number of your work in which you do not earnestly point attention to the important fact, that man's character is formed for him—there is not a number in which you do not show the immense power which this fact has given to priests and despots to subject and enslave the bodies and minds of men. This you cannot do too often or too earnestly, for it is one of the good things of which we can never have too much.

Before concluding, I would fain say a few words about those parties to whom the opinion that man's character is formed for him and not by him, has proved a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. In No. 7 you made some very just remarks upon the folly and stupidity of men refusing to assist the socialists in their economical schemes, because the socialists had interlarded infidelity with their system. Now, sir, to my seeming, the men who refused to assist the socialists, because infidelity and socialism were so intimately connected—granting such objectors to be sincere believers in the value of religion—were far more rational than those men of *sense* who would fall out with, or refuse to assist, the socialists, because of the unphilosophical *wording* of a sentence—supposing their opinion to be correct. It is pretty certain that if we treat men as the creatures of circumstances, they will do just as much towards the formation of their own characters as they would if they were treated as of a mixed nature. The error, if error it be, was at least on the right side for inducing the creation of the most favourable circumstances by which to form man's character. Of two evils I think the least would be the supposition that man is the creature of circumstances, rather than that he has a free will, through which to form his own character.

However erroneous these opinions may be, I have submitted them in all candour, and I have no doubt you will treat them in a like spirit.

W. CHILTON.

## SOME CURIOUS OPINIONS,

DRAWN FROM THE WRITINGS OF DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS.

God is an abstract and unintelligible word—a great subject of dispute, and signal of proscriptions.—*Lablée*.

Upon all subjects submitted to human intelligence, our ideas have become simplified and enlightened in proportion as we have occupied ourselves about them. But upon the word God, our ideas have become more complicated and obscured—which is always the case, while we speak of a thing without understanding it, or use words of which we know not the meaning.—*Ibid*.

Others, whose heads sublimer notions trace,  
Cunningly prove that God's almighty space—  
And space we're sure is nothing, *ergo*, thou,  
These men slip into the truth, they know not how.

*Toland*.

There exists a certain generating, procreative, or formative nature, which acts fatally, magically, and sympathetically. It is incorporeal, but is the same as the laws of motion. It is inferior to the Deity, and has no object or design. Yet it is not an occult quality, but the unique, intelligent cause of the order, constancy, and beauty of the universe.—*Cudworth*.

God is a nature or mind, endowed with a most perfect knowledge and wisdom, which exists of itself from eternity, and has given all other things life and birth.—*Ibid*.

By supposing the material world to contain the principle of order within itself, we really assert it to be God—and the sooner we arrive at that Divine Being the better. When you go one step beyond the mundane system, you only excite an inquisitive humour, which it is impossible ever to satisfy.—*Hume*.

The universe presents nothing but the idea of a blind nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children.—*Ibid*.

The true conclusion is, that the original source of all things, has no more regard to good above ill than to heat above cold.—*Ibid*.

What think you of an uncaused cause of everything? and a Being (God) who has no relation to time, not being older to day than he was yesterday, nor younger to day than he will be to-morrow?—who has no relation to space, not



being a part here and a part there, or a whole anywhere?—*Bishop Watson*.

The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a first cause, the cause of all things.—*Paine*.

Do we want to know what God is? Search the scripture called the creation.—*Ibid*.

Gravitation depends, if upon a fluid which, though both powerful and universal in its operation, is no object of sense to us—if upon any other kind of substance or action, upon a substance or action from which we receive no distinguishable impressions. Is it, then, to be wondered at, that it should in some measure be the same with the Divine nature?—*Paley*.

Philosophy teaches there is a God—but it cannot teach us what he is, what he does, how and wherefore he does—if he exists in time, if he is in space, if he has acted at once, or if he always acts—if he is in matter, if he is not. It is necessary to be himself, in order to know him.—*Voltaire*.

God is merely an operation of our minds.—*Saint Floscel*.  
Clouds are the powder of God's feet.—*Racine*.

The idea of God is innate. To deny the existence of innate ideas, is, in effect, to furnish unbelievers' victorious weapons wherewith to combat the existence of God, and the immortality of our souls.—*Cochet*.

What means the word God? The unknown cause of order and of motion. But what can be said of an unknown cause? When philosophers attach other ideas to the word God, they fall, as Mr. Robinet has proved, into a thousand contradictions.—*Helvetius*.

If God made man in his own image, man has amply returned the compliment.—*Fontenelle*.

God, the first monad, before communicating himself to inferior beings, first diffuses himself into the principal number, namely, the number three.—*Cornelius Agrippa*.

God is the true, perfect, and entire essence of all things.—*J. B. Van Helmont*.

God is not a part, but the whole.—*Raymond Lulli*.

The proofs which reason can furnish for the existence of God are only probable.—*Gabriel Biel*.

For men to obtain a certain and indubitable knowledge of God, it is necessary that they should be taught the divine attributes as articles of faith.—*Saint Thomas Aquinas*.

We say concerning God, not what is right, but what the weakness of human nature can bear. For we do not explain what God is, but we confess with candour that we have no accurate knowledge of him—for in what regards the Deity, it is a great knowledge to confess one's ignorance.—*Saint Cyrillus*.

The creator is extremely beautiful, and binds the elements with numbers.—*Severinus Boethius*.

God occasionally produces matter out of himself.—*Origen*.  
Spiritualism is the last retrenchment of theologians, who have contrived to manufacture a God less than ariel, in the hope, no doubt, that such a God would be unattainable. And, indeed, so it is, seeing that to attack him, is to combat a chimera.—*D Holbach*.

The first substance, which is the basis of all substance, but does not exist in anything subject, is the space which forms the substratum of the whole collection of bodies. In this sense, God is improperly called a substance.—*Campanella*.

God alone is the primitive unity, or simple originary substance—from whom all created and derivative monads are produced, they being, as it were, born from the Divinity's continual flugurations.—*Lebnitz*.

If space were an absolute being, it would be God.—*Ibid*.

God is in himself, and all other creatures are in him—but beyond God is nothing. All things, therefore, derive their origin from God, and are together in God.—*Christianus Thomasius*.

God is a being merely active, a pure act, a spirit, a most efficacious virtue, a light, a most subtle wind.—*Ibid*.

The space in which all bodies are moved is a spirit, and the space in which all spirits are moved is God.—*Ibid*.

The existence of a watch, proves the existence of a watch-maker—a picture indicates a painter—a house announces an architect—see here arguments of terrible force for children. Philosophy would willingly accept them, if in so doing, it did not find itself replunged into a sea of interminable difficulties—it loves better to believe that intelligence is an effect of matter's motion, than to attribute it, to an all-powerful workman, who cannot be, according to those who believe in him, material, or at all analogous to material existences.—*Grimm*.

We cannot conceive, say theologians, how mere motion, undirected by intelligence, should have produced such a world as we inhabit, and we verily believe him. Nobody can conceive it—but it is a *fact*, nevertheless, and we see it, which is nearly as good.—*Ibid*.

Seeing too much to deny, and too little to satisfy my reason, I am in a state the most pitiful, in which I have wished an hundred times, that if a God sustains nature, he would make the fact unequivocal; and that if the marks of his existence on the face of nature are deceitful, he would suppress them altogether; in a word, that he would declare all or nothing, in order that I might understand what course I ought to follow.—*Pascal*.

Z zimus, in his Petinotologie argues from *birds*: Richter, in his Iethyotologie, from *fishes*; C. S. Curio, and Ger. Meier from *spiders*; Rathlef, in his Akridotologie, from *locusts*; Lesser, in his Testaceotologie, from *shell fish*; and in his Insectotologie, from *insects*. Even *mice*, *ants*, and *silkworms*, have afforded excellent arguments in favour of God's wisdom; and, have, no doubt, equally shown the ingenuity and the orthodoxy of the pious naturalists who condescended to investigate their habits. Moreover, Andrew Murray, in 1724, has argued from the voice of animals; Leon. Bohner, in 1725, from the variety of the external forms of animals; and, in the same year, Reimarus proved "the existence of a most wise God" from the instinct of brutes.

Rational beings, and even irrational, have thus proved the existence of a Being supremely rational; we need not, therefore, be surprised if we arrive at the same result from the consideration of beings, or rather things, yet lower in the scale of organisation. The plants attest a Deity, according to the Phytothologie of Jul. Bern. Von Rohr, and various treatises of J. Christian Bauermann. The *mountains* are "witnesses of the Deity," in the opinion of Faverlinus; and Lesser, in his Lithothologie, argues even from *stones*. These are German treatises; if the English may be mentioned, the "Metaphysical and Divine Contemplations on the Magnet," by that enlightened witch burner, Sir Matthew Hale.

After mountains and stones, nothing more simple can be imagined than the elements, and even these unorganised substances evince the existence of a grand organiser, for that most laborious of scholars, Jo. Alb. Fabricius proves a Deity, in his Hydrothologie, from *water*; and his Pyrothologie, from *fire*. It may be added, that the water argument must to a certain degree have been previously alluded to in Meier's treatise on *rain*, and Leutwein's upon *snow*—as the fire argument may afterwards have been improved by the treatise upon *thunder and lightning* by Von Seelen, Zopf, Rhyzel, and Ahlwardt.—*Hibbert*.

Let those who in these days of arian, socinian, and rabbinical blasphemy, have any doubt whether *Aleim*, when meaning the true God Jehovah, is plural or not, consult the scripture, where they will find it joined with adjectives, pronouns, and verbs plural!—*Parkhurst*.

O that the children of Abraham according to the flesh, would attentively consider and compare the texts contained in their own scripture! Could they then help owning a *plurality* of Aleim in Jehovah? When they read, for instance, Gen. i. 26, that the Aleim said, "Let us (or we will) make men in our image, according to our likeness"—and compared these words with Eccles. xii. 1, "Remember thy *creators*," could they doubt whether Aleim as applied by Moses in the history of the creation, denoted a plurality of agents?—*Ibid*.

These Elahim (Aleim) were the decans of the Egyptians, the geni of the months and planets among the Persians and Chaldeans, God—Geni mentioned under their own name by the Phœnician author Sanconiothion, where he says, the companions of Hor El, who is Kronos (Saturn), were called Eloim or Kronians, and were said to be the equals of Kronos.—*Volney*.

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# THE IRVING STIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAPTESBURY.

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## MATERIALISM.

Besides the universe, there is nothing; and if there be anything, it is contained in the universe, either as a part, or excreescence thereof. . . . The universe is to all other things the cause of being, safety, and perfection; wherefore of itself it must needs be eternal, perfect and permanent for ever.—*Oculus Lucanus.*

THERE IS SOMETHING! *That* truth admits not of being evidenced. It is nevertheless universally accepted. It is accepted by men of all religious opinions, equally with men of no religious opinions. If any truth may be called self-demonstrated and eternal, here is that truth. Any attempt to call it in question would be sheer madness. We may doubt the existence of an external world; we may be sceptical as to the reality of our own bodies, but we cannot doubt that *there is something*. The proposition falls not within the domain of scepticism. It must be true. To suppose it false, is literally impossible. Its falsehood would involve a contradiction, and all contradictions involve impossibilities. But if proof of this were needed, we have it in the fact, that no man, sage or simple, ever pretended to deny that *there is something*. What ever men could deny or doubt, they have doubted or denied but in no country of the world, in no age, has the dogma *there is something* been denied or even treated as doubtful. Here, then, materialists and immaterialists agree. They agree of necessity. There is no escape from the conclusion that *something is*, except by adopting the unintelligible dogma *there is nothing*, which no human being can, as nothing amounts to nothing, and of what amounts to nothing no one can have an idea. Any attempt to define the word *something* by any other word would be labour in vain. There is no other word in the English language, whose meaning is better understood; and those who do not understand what it means, (if such there be) are not likely to understand the meaning of any words whatever. Ideas of *something* all have. Ideas of *nothing* none have. *That there is something*, I repeat, must be true; all dogmas or propositions being necessarily true, whose denial involves an impossibility. What the nature of that *something* may be is a secondary question; and however determined cannot affect the primary dogma. Things are things, whatever may be their individual or aggregate nature. Nor is it of the slightest consequence what name or names we may see fit to give things, so that each word has its fixed and true meaning. Whether, for example, we use as the sign of that *something which is*, the word *universe*, or *God*, or *substance*, or *spirit*, or *matter*, or the letter *x*, is of no importance, if we understand the word or letter used, to be merely the sign of that *something*. Words are only useful when they are the signs of true ideas; evidently, therefore, their legitimate function is to convey such ideas; and words which convey no ideas at all, or, what is far worse, only those which are false, should at once be expunged from the vocabularies of nations. *Something is*. The materialist calls it *matter*. Other people may choose to call it other names. Let them. He chooses to call it this one, and no other. Call it what name or names we please, it is *something* still; *this* immaterialists allow, and *this* is all for which materialists contend.

*There ever has been something.* Here again is a point of unity. All are equally assured *there ever has been something*. "Something is, something must always have been," cry religionists, and the cry is echoed by the irreligious. The last dogma, like the first, admits not of being evidenced. As nothing is inconceivable, it follows that we cannot even imagine a time when there was nothing. Materialists say *something ever was*, which something is *matter*, immaterialists say "*something has been from all eternity*," which something, however, they call *God*. The something which *is*, they call sometimes *substance*, sometimes *matter*, but the something which *was* they have taken a fancy to call *God*: whereas the materialists call *matter* not only the something which *is*, but the something which *was*, because they hold there never was, is not, and never can be but one something. Upon the principle, therefore, that one thing should have one name, and one name only, they have agreed to call the eternal something *matter*.

Theologians affirm that there was a time when matter did not exist. They affirm its creation from nothing, by a something which existed before the universe. Indeed, the idea of universal creation involves first that of universal annihilation; and secondly that of a something prior to the universe. What creates a universe must exist before the universe, in the same way that he who manufactures a watch must exist before the watch. As already remarked, immaterialists agree with materialists that something ever has been, but the point of difference lies here. The materialist declares that *matter* is the eternal something, and challenges proof of its beginning to be. The immaterialist as pertinaciously insists that *matter* is not the eternal something, but *God is*; and when pushed for a statement of what he means by *God*, he answers, a *Being* having nothing in common with anything, who, nevertheless, by his almighty will created everything. They will not allow that fancied Being to be nothing, so of course he must be something; but then theologians will not allow it is either material or at all allied with materiality; and though plain, common-sense sort of people are likely to think such a something very like nothing, it is nevertheless considered by those traffickers in credulity, rankly blasphemous to say their God is nothing. They are sure God is something, and would willingly fine, imprison, or even put to death, the assertors of aught to the contrary; but they are equally sure that God is not material; if a person, absolutely without organisation—an organisation, without parts or passions. Surely a something God of this character is very like nothing. As, however, theologians themselves are constrained to admit that "out of nothing, nothing can come;" they see plainly it will not do to refine "the divine creator of the universe," into absolute nothingness, though according to Toland, some of our theologians do refine to that extent. He alludes to those who—

Cunningly prove their God an empty space—  
And space we're sure is nothing, ergo, thou,  
These men slip into the truth, they know not how.

The style in which the bulk of unnaturalists argue this question is, in truth, lamentably ludicrous. They will not, in so many words, candidly acknowledge that their God is *nothing*; no, they only go so far as to admit he is *not anything*. The



difference between *not anything* and *nothing* it is hard to discover. One would imagine that even theological eyes would fail to perceive it. But theologians *say* they see a mighty difference between them—and those of them, too, who rank no less high as philosophers than theosophers. This “most learned” set of priests, have rejected the word *spirit* upon the ground of its positive significance, and adopted the word *immaterial* on the ground that it is negatively significant, and *only* negatively significant. When, say they, we call God an immaterial Being, we merely pledge ourselves that he is not material. What he is, we know not—but we do know what he is not. He is not *matter*—of that we are fully assured. But to say God is a *spirit*, is to speak positively of him. To say God is immaterial, is a convenient way of declaring we do not know what he is—the word immaterial meaning merely that which is not material—as, however, no human being has experience of any save material existence, it is plain that by calling God immaterial, we take the safe side, and escape a host of difficulties. Whereas, if we call God a *spirit*, the word *spirit* being universally associated with the idea of something positive and tangible, we may be called upon to explain its nature, which would place us in an awkward predicament.

This is substantially what certain learned christians, *not* Thebans, say in favour of taking up the negative position. And, certainly, their reasons for doing so are very weighty. Hobbes expressly states, “A spirit is determined by its place and figure, and consequently is a body, however thin and intangible.” Obviously, therefore, if God is a *spirit*, he is a *body* of some sort. He may be thin, and quite intangible to our sense—but body the most thin and least tangible is still body. Now, *body* may be called *spirit*, but it is what materialists call *matter*. A god with parts, or body, must be a *material* God, whether called *spirit* or any other fanciful name. Adopting this definition of *spirit*, it is clear that to *spiritualise* God is to *materialise* him, to *materialise* is, in other words, to prove him *matter*—and to prove God *matter* is, in effect, to *destroy the idea of God*. The worshippers of a material God (if any such there are) must be mad, indeed—and yet it is hard to comprehend what can be God, if *matter* is not. The materialist discards the word God—he can see no utility in its use. He thinks that if *matter* is God, and if God is *matter*, one of the two terms should be discarded, as there ought not to be in any one language two words expressive of the same idea. Ideas are often similar, though not the same, in which cases words expressive of their various shades of difference are indispensable to their correct application—but when any two words convey *exactly* the same idea, one of them is superfluous. If then, the *something that is*, or *something that ever has been*, is correctly expressed by the word *matter*—God is a word entirely superfluous. If, however, the eternal something is immaterial, then *matter*, which stands for the material, is not the word that can with propriety be used—but God, substance, or any other negative, that is, no-meaning term, may fitly be invented. Those who are not content to let the word God be the understood sign of their own ignorance, and confidently tell us God is a *spirit*, are neither atheists nor materialists, because they do not understand either atheism or materialism—but they unconsciously furnish excellent arguments in favour of both—for by asserting that their God is a *spirit*, they, in effect, admit his materiality, and as *matter* cannot by possibility *create matter*, it follows that a spiritual God could not have created the universe. The universe is allowed to be *matter*—but *matter* cannot create *matter*, ergo, a spiritual, that is, material God, could not have created the universe. With immateriality, if it exist, we are entirely unacquainted. Its nature, supposing it to have a nature, is confessedly unnatural. None have seen an immaterial Being—none can conceive such a Being. Yet immaterialists assert that an immaterial Being created all materialities. They gravely tell us the sea is his, and he made it, and his hand prepared the dry land. The idea of an unnatural Being *making* the sea, and *preparing* the dry land, with his *hand*, too, is not over clear. The idea, too, of having a sort of vested interest in either land or sea, is exceedingly rich. Picturing the unnatural Being who created nature, as a kind of universal property-holder, is proof of considerable grossness in the artists—I mean the manufacturers of such a picture. But pretty pictures of Deity, very like this, have often been drawn, by master hands, too—and not orthodox hands either—the late Richard Carlile’s, to wit, who told us in his “*Republican*,” Vol. I. p. 99, that *Padme*,

by searching, had positively found out God—and, after quoting from that writer some spicy bits of theism, challenged “the priests of Europe to produce, in the same space, quotations from all the sermons that ever were published—anything like this grand and demonstrative proof of the power, wisdom, goodness, and mercy of the *great proprietor of nature*.”

It can surprise no one that materialism has hitherto made such little progress in Europe, when reputed materialists write such wild nonsense. It is indeed, scarcely credible that Richard Carlile, who so long enjoyed an atheistical reputation, should have wasted ink about “the great proprietor of nature.” Immaterialists may consistently enough talk about an *owner* of the universe—for having arrived at the astonishing conclusion that all was created little more than six thousand years ago, or at least “in time,” they naturally consider its creator in the light of proprietor. But materialists reject the idea of creation. The eternity of matter is the truth on which their system is built. If matter is not eternal, materialism is not philosophy, but folly. If, on the other hand, matter is eternal, immaterialism, so far from being sound philosophy, is the most foolish of all follies. Theologians always shirk this decisive question. In no instance have they manfully grappled with it. They content themselves with taking for granted that matter must have been created, and upon that monstrous assumption they build their system. I pray the reader to mark the fact well. I pray him, also, to note what pains clerical gentlemen take to mis-state the views of materialists, with respect to this cardinal question of matter’s eternity. There is now before me an extract from a book written by the Reverend Enoch Pond, D.D. about geology and revelation, as he calls it. As it well illustrates the swindling spirit in which those men deal with their opponents, I here quote it:

The geological conclusion that this *world* must have had a beginning is of very great importance in connection with natural theology. The most plausible of all the atheistical hypotheses are those which assert the eternity of the *world*. Without undervaluing anything which has been written with a view to refute these unreasonable suppositions, the proper refutation of them is to be sought, and is found, in the *world* itself. Tracing back geologically the history of this globe, after successive generations we arrive at a period when it contained no living thing, and when it was incapable of sustaining any form of life with which we are acquainted. Therefore geology teaches that the world had a beginning, to be sure it places its origin at a very remote period, still there was an *origin*, there was a beginning.

This is altogether a choice extract. Its concocter must be a most extraordinary individual. An extraordinary rogue, or what is perhaps more likely, an “out and out simpleton.” Any one reading, without some previous knowledge of “atheistical hypotheses,” would imagine that their framers really meant by *world*, this little beggarly planet of ours, whereas they never dreamt of asserting that it never had a beginning as a *planet*. On the contrary, all geological facts prove to their entire satisfaction that “this world (that is, our planet) must have had a beginning. Not, however, a beginning in the impossible sense in which that word is used by theologians. They do not imagine that our planet was *conjured* out of nothing, at any period, remote or distant, but they are convinced that in countless ages past, “It contained no living thing—and was incapable of sustaining any form of life with which we are acquainted.” That our planet always existed in *some* shape, materialists assert, but they *know* it was not “always as it now is,” and think that at some period immensely remote, it was mere vapour, such as comets are *presumed* to be, and like them, moving *eccentrically* through space. We *know* that plants, fruits, and animals, begin to be in a certain sense—that is, they begin to be as plants, fruits, and animals—but the atoms of which they are composed are eternal, as that universe of which they form a part. If by any accident, or necessity, our planet were now shivered to atoms, is any so silly as to suppose a single atom would be lost, or that the universe would be smaller or greater in consequence? The universe must be boundless—and, if boundless, neither atoms nor aggregate are in any danger of going astray. The idea of absolute annihilation is ridiculous, equally so is the idea of an absolute beginning. Yet upon this precious pair of ideas do theologians establish their *immaterial* philosophy. “To expel matter out of the universe,” in other words, the universe out of itself, they are incessantly labouring. They are *ente* enough to comprehend that their God, omnipotent as they deem him, would have been puzzled to create the universe, if it never was out of existence. Matter, they

plainly perceive must have been *out* of existence, before it could have come *into* existence. God himself could not have called all things out of nothing, or nonentity, if *any* thing eternally existed. Hence the extreme awkwardness of *their* position—and strength of the materialist's. So long as men find themselves impotent to conceive absolute annihilation, so long they will be unjustified in admitting an absolute creation—for it is grossly unreasonable to admit the truth of any dogmas at the very moment we cannot even conceive their truth. If the Rev. Enoch Pond had said, the most plausible of materialist hypotheses are those which assert the eternity of the universe, he would have hit the right nail rightly on the head. But no, from design, or sheer stupidity, he couples together eternity and our little bit of a world. Not content with that, he tries hard to confound the totally distinct ideas of relative and absolute beginning. The materialist freely allows that all appearances have a beginning, but that things necessarily, and therefore eternally exist. Materialists do not assert the eternity of *our* world, as a world, but they *do* assert the eternity of the universe, as a universe. When Enoch Pond, or any other reverend wiseacre,

Seiz'd with a strong desire  
To set the Thames on fire,

shall trace back geologically the history, *not* of this *globe*, but this *universe*—when they shall succeed in collecting facts whereon to predicate the assertion that “at a very remote period,” the universe neither in whole nor in part existed—but both in whole and in part was *willed* into existence by an immaterial Being they call God—when they shall do all this, they will be in a fair way to prove the truth of their system. Professor Porson said of a certain poem, by Southey, that it would be read *when* Homer and Virgil were forgotten, but *not till then*. And I say to these immaterialists, gentlemen, your system will be received as true when reason and sense are utterly forgotten, but *not till then*. Never can we, without setting reason and sense at defiance, lay down as an incontrovertible axiom, that *something* men of all opinions admit to be *eternal*, though itself a non-entity, could be the creator of all entities. Theologians call this a divine axiom, but they are now, as through ages past, privileged to deceive, privileged to assert without proving, and to reap without labouring. They care little who labours, if they reap—they care less who proves, so that they are allowed to assert. They assert a creation, because, if they did not, there would be no chance for them to invent a creator. In vain does philosophy insist that:

Infinity within, infinity without, belie creation.

They cannot do without the opposing dogma. Hence their abhorrence of materialism—for *that* rests on data, indestructible as the things from which they are derived, *that* appeals to the universally admitted eternity of *something* in “confirmation strong” of its fundamental dogma. The materialist argues that, if something ever has been, it is natural to conclude the universe is that something—because if universal annihilation be possible, he finds himself unable to conceive such possibility, and because, if universal creation be admitted as possible, or even probable fact, a self-existent Being was its creator, whose eternity it is no less hard to admit than the eternity of our universe. The immaterialist assumes that the universe is the handy-work of an *uncaused cause*; whereas, the materialist, acting upon the philosophical axiom, that it is not fitting needlessly to multiply causes, thinks that the universe itself is the *uncaused cause*, not of all things, but of all *effects*. The universe necessarily exists. Such is the bottom dogma of materialism. God necessarily exists. Such is the bottom dogma of immaterialism. Now who is so mentally blind as not to see that if it is hard to understand how the universe can be self-existent, it is no less hard to understand how a Being distinct from, yet capable of creating it, can be self-existent. If eternal matter is inexplicable, surely eternal nonentity is not very easy of explication. To hear theologians rant and rave, one would imagine that though it is the height of absurdity to conclude that the universe is the uncaused, therefore eternal something, we reach the very pinnacle of wisdom when “we settle it in our own minds as a maxim never to be effaced” that a Being whose nature (if, indeed, a *supernatural* Being can properly be said to have a nature) is utterly unknown to us, is not only the

uncaused cause of universal phenomena, but of the universe itself. They can discover nothing like preposterousness in the idea of a self-existent creator of all things, and nothing like sanity in the idea of a self-existent universe, which, by the motion of its parts, is necessarily the parent of all *effects*. In vain the materialist urges that the universe, all save the blind may see, but that no man has seen the Being *they say* created it, at any time. In vain they urge that of the universe we do know a little, while of the Being *they say* created it we know absolutely nothing. In vain they urge that all our ideas are derived from the universe, and consequently relate to the universe—whereas, of a *supernatural* Being, which *they say* God is, we cannot, unless ourselves *supernatural*, understand one tittle. But all is vain, for all is cared not for by theologians, who, like the deal adder, “heed not the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.” Mr. Locke said:

All that can fall within the compass of human understanding being either—first, the nature of things, as they exist in themselves, their relations, and their manner of operation, or, secondly, that which man ought to do as a rational and voluntary agent, for the attainment of any end, especially happiness; or, thirdly, the ways and means by which the knowledge of both the one and the other may be attained.

Now, I put it to the immaterialists themselves whether, in the first place, their God is a *thing*—whether, in the second place, if a thing, they know ought about his *nature*, that is, as he exists in himself, his relations, and mode of operation? If they reply, as they needs must, I presume, in the negative, I farther demand of them what *business* they have to talk about a Being of whose nature, *if*, as already remarked, it have a nature, relations, and *modus operandi*, they are entirely ignorant? It is not, however, unlikely that immaterialists will care very little for the authority or reasonings of Locke, who, it must be allowed, was *very material* in his conceptions. Indeed, his famous “Essay on the Human Understanding,” might not inappropriately be entitled the “Materialist’s Manual,” for it contains arguments at once clear and decisive against the *fraudulent* ideas that any knowledge of immaterialities can fall within the compass of human understanding. Notwithstanding all that has been said about the *piety* of Locke, his writings prove him a *materialist*. Now a materialist cannot believe in any other than a material God—but as all theologians of orthodox reputation say that the materialisers of God are rank atheists, who *vain* would, but have not the courage to declare themselves so, I have not the least objection to make them a present of Locke’s *piety*, if they will only take his *materialism* along with it.

It seems to me incontestable that all materialists, if consistent, must be atheists; for how can those who steadfastly assert the eternity of things, and as steadfastly assert that all things are material, really believe in an unnatural creator of things? The late Julian Hibbert observed, that “After acknowledging matter to be eternal, we need not seek a cause for the universe.” He farther observed, that “Theism and atheism only differ in supposing that the formative particles were moved, either by the invisible finger of an always incomprehensible (and now, perhaps, defunct) animal, or otherwise by the probably invisible agency of a now unknown modification or property of matter.”

There are, however, theists who, though affecting to believe in a “very wise, very powerful, and very good God,” yet think they may safely allow that matter is eternal, “for ought they know to the contrary.” One of these “odd fellows” has penned some “Remarks,” on certain articles that appeared in early numbers of this paper. These Remarks were handed to me last evening, with the significant permission to do what I liked with them. I know nothing of their author personally or by name, but the style in which they are written, proves that he is an individual of more than common talents. I shall take an early opportunity to publish and comment upon the *whole* of those Remarks—but at present, must confine myself to a brief consideration of one, which, indeed, is the only one having a direct bearing upon the question now under consideration. This author says:

If the world was made, it was made either from materials or no materials. It matters not which if it was made—and if any one urges as an argument that in supposing the world to be made from matter, I shall be allowing matter to be eternal, I may safely admit that so it may be for anything I know to the contrary—but how is it possible for me to know—me who cannot tell whether the moon is inhabited or not, or what is the appearance of those phases of the sun and moon which are not turned to the earth, and which we never see. We may safely admit our ignorance.



We have no means of forming an opinion, one way or the other—but we *have* the means of forming an opinion that organised beings were made and that the whole world was made, and that all was made by a Being very wise, very powerful, and very good, in other words, by God.

Now, I readily grant that *if* the world (that is, the universe) was made, it was made either from materials or no materials. No theist ever concocted a “safer” proposition than that. It is of the class “*wot* can’t be wrong.” I also grant it matters not *which* it was made of *if* it was made. But what a pity it is this author did not at least attempt to show it was made. He should have shown, if it can be shown, that it is more probable the whole, or universe, was made by an unmade something distinct from itself, than that, as the materialist deems more probable, that it never was made at all. As to the query—how is it possible for us to know that matter is eternal? I might retort upon him by the equally legitimate query—how is it possible for us to know that people, in other respects like ourselves, do not ramble about in the planet Mars with their heads under their bellies? I will not, however, content myself by only doing this; but tell this author that we know from analogy that matter ever existed. I tell him that I just as much know from analogy that the universe could not have been created, that is, produced, out of nothing, as I know any other fact from analogy. How do I know that a stone thrown into the air will return to the ground? From analogy. How do I know that the earth will revolve once and once only on its axis, during the next twenty-four hours? from analogy. How do I know myriads of truths? my answer still is, from analogy; and from analogy, I repeat, the materialist knows that matter cannot be annihilated, therefore, if for no other reason, could not have been created. Mark, reader, the annihilation of matter is possible, but it is not probable, and the discussion between materialists is not one affecting possibilities, but only probabilities. This author himself admits, in another part of his Remarks, that “certainty is obtained either through the means of our senses, or by demonstrative arguments, or by accumulation of probabilities.” He therefore cannot fail to understand what I mean by saying that the “discussion between materialists and their opponents is not one affecting possibilities, but probabilities.” Now, then, what declares analogy as to the probability of matter’s annihilation. Let Dr. Arnott answer:\*

With respect to delicate combinations of these elements such as exist in animal and vegetable bodies, although it be beyond human art, originally to produce, or even closely to imitate them, still, in their decomposition and apparent destruction, the accomplished chemist of the present day does not lose a single atom. The coal which burns in his apparatus until only a little ash remains behind, or the wax taper that *seems* to vanish altogether in the flame, or the portion of animal flesh, which putrefies and gradually dries up and disappears, present to us phenomena which are now proved to be only changes of connexion and arrangement among the indestructible ultimate atoms; and the chemist can offer all the elements again, mixed or separate, as desired, for any of the useful purposes to which they are severally applicable.

Here, we have the admission of a scientific believer in God, that atoms are indestructible. Chemists find it impossible to annihilate an atom—the universe can be no other than an immense assemblage of atoms—the inference therefore is, it cannot be annihilated. Analogy justifies this inference—it is the only inference, that humanly speaking, we can arrive at—and as to the superhuman, we know nothing whatever about it—and knowing nothing, should be content to say nothing. Should we not deem an individual *moon-struck*, who went about declaring he *knew* the moon was inhabited? And why should we thus deem him, if not from a conviction that the analogies between our earth and the moon are not so clear or decisive as to warrant the inference that the moon is inhabited, or at all events inhabited by beings like ourselves? As to “The appearance of those phases of the sun and moon which are not turned to the earth, and which are never seen,” analogy teaches that they have no appearances whatever, the word appearance having no meaning, except when used to express certain effects produced by things upon our organs of sense. Again, this author tells us, “we may safely admit our own ignorance.” If so, why is he not among the first to set so modest and praise-worthy example, instead of writing dogmatism by the yard about a *supernatural* Being, “very wise, very powerful, and very good?”—a Being whose existence cannot be legitimately inferred from any known analogies. This excessively modest author, who pleads his ignorance of almost everything,

nevertheless, assures us, that we have the means of forming an opinion that organised beings are made, and that the world was made, and that all was made, by the very wise, very powerful, and very good being, he calls God. Now this is the strangest mode of confessing ignorance imaginable. Here is an author, who don’t know whether the moon is inhabited or not—yet knows that *all* was made, our world and organised beings, of course, included—I don’t know when, nor, it may be presumed, does he. As he talks a great deal about mathematical and logical reasonings, I suppose he intends these Remarks as a sample of the genuine sort, and genuine undoubtedly they are—but, unluckily, genuine folly is none the better for being genuine. He has talent for the mathematical and logical, no doubt, but judging from the Remarks, I do not think him at all competent to deal with great metaphysical questions. That he is not, will appear, I think, when the whole of his remarks shall have been faithfully dissected. For the present, I dismiss this author, and this question of materialism—to both of which I shall take an early opportunity to again pay my respects.

## REPLY TO THE LETTER OF W. CHILTON,

CONTAINED IN LAST “INVESTIGATOR.”

It has been said of Kant’s disciples, that when their master’s philosophy was attacked, and they found themselves unable to answer satisfactorily, or even intelligibly, the reasoning of its opponents, they exclaimed, “Oh you have not understood us.” No doubt such a procedure spared them a vast deal of pains, and extorted them from very many dilemmas. It is far easier to tell those who hold opinions antagonistic to our own, that they don’t understand us, than so to state those opinions as to make them understood. The convenience of this practice to philosophical systemists of all kinds, and especially those of the transcendental sort, no one can question—but though such a mode of dealing with opponents may be convenient, it is very supicious, and not always creditable. The short is, that considered as a general practice, it is “far more honoured in the breach than in the observance.” Notwithstanding, however, my dislike to the practice, I feel bound to adopt it on this occasion. I must say that friend Chilton has *not* understood me—nay, more, he has entirely *mis*-understood me, which is yet worse than merely not understanding. No doubt the cause of such misconception may, with perfect justice, be attributed rather to my paradoxical, and, perhaps obscure, mode of conveying my thoughts, than any lack of penetration in him—but whatever the cause, the effect has been an utter misconception on his part of the meaning I intended to convey in my article on “Socialist Books and Socialist Doctrines,” contained in the INVESTIGATOR, No. 5. This it is hoped will manifestly appear from what follows.

Friend Chilton has, in his letter, confounded two essentially distinct questions—and to this unlucky mixing up of propositions, having nothing in common, may be traced all those errors which are ramified and re-ramified through every line of it. Is man the creature of circumstances?—that is *one* question. Friend Chilton contends that he is. A large portion of his letter is occupied in establishing that he is. But the labour was altogether superfluous, seeing that I never for an instant doubted it. I admit that man is the creature of circumstances in the “widest possible sense” in which those terms can be used—but though quite assured of that important truth, I am equally assured it is a senseless as well as verbal error to say, “the character of man is formed for and *not* by him.”

This latter error friend Chilton calls the “fundamental principle of socialism;” I call it nonsense—whatever isn’t it may be fundamental to. But, in truth, so far from being the fundamental principle of socialism, it is directly hostile to that principle. That I may not again be misunderstood, I must here investigate the whole question somewhat at large.

Every educated socialist knows that philologically speaking it is inaccurate to call, as friend Chilton has, “original organisation” a circumstance; as in philological strictness circumstances are something external to, or rather encircling organisation—something round about it. Now organisation cannot of course be external to, encircling, or round about itself.

\* Elements of Physics and Natural Philosophy; Part I., pp. 7, 8.

Organisation is the product of circumstances, but not itself a circumstance. I beg friend Chilton to understand that I am writing now as a mere man of grammar and technicalities. I am however no stickler for philological accuracy, when philosophical accuracy can be attained without it; and conceiving it perfectly compatible with philosophical accuracy to call the "original organisation" a circumstance, I am quite willing that friend Chilton should argue from, or upon it, as though it were.

Well, then, I accept the "original organisation," not only as the thing of circumstance," but as itself a circumstance, aye, and a circumstance of vast importance, too. Friend Chilton acknowledges it to be so. He even goes so far as to declare that it "*entirely* depends upon the original organisation" what effects shall be produced *upon* it by circumstances. Now if this be so, how can it be wisely said by anybody, or *consistently* said by friend Chilton, that the character of the organisation, *him*, or *man* (for these three terms, are to me of precisely the same signification) is formed for and *not* by itself? He admits that the organisation plays a very important part in the work of its own modification; which is all I now and all I ever have contended for. To say man is the creature of an "invincible necessity" is to my thinking quite right; to say his character is formed for and *not* by him, is quite wrong. To allow, first, that individual organisation is the individual man—to allow, secondly, that it much depends upon the reacting force of individual organisation, what shall be the nature of influences produced upon external things—and, thirdly, to assert that the character of each individual through every stage of his or her existence is formed for and *not* by such individual, is indeed singularly inconsistent. Either it must be denied that the organisation plays *any* part whatever in the formation of character, or it is "positively false" to say that the character of individual or aggregate organisations is formed for and *not* by them. Expunge the *not* from this sentence, and a wise, though somewhat paradoxical, sentence is left behind. Yes, the character of man is formed for him *and* by him. To vulgar eyes this will seem to involve a contradiction, but friend Chilton, if I do not greatly misappreciate him, will see in it one of the very many paradoxes out of which springs vital truth. Paradox has been defined, as truth above vulgar comprehension, and such a truth I hope to show the *refined* may be comprehended in my paradoxical proposition, "the character of each individual is formed for and by him."

Friend Chilton tells me, "Physiologists are of opinion that the fœtus is entirely devoid of sensation and voluntary motion, and that it is not until after birth that an important part of the animal economy, the nervous, takes any part in the formation of the animal's character." Now, I grant the facts, but deny friend Chilton's inferences from the facts. I grant that the fœtus is entirely devoid of sensation and voluntary motion. I grant that it is not until after birth, that an important part of the animal economy, the nervous, comes into play—but I put it to him, whether the fœtus, involuntary as are its motions, and sensationless as is its substance, does not play *some* part in the work of its own modification? So far as regards the question at issue, between myself and friend Chilton, it matters not, whether the part played by "original organisation," be important or unimportant. The question to be decided is, does it or does it not play *any* part?—because if it play any part at all, it cannot be correct to say its character is formed for and *not* by it—though quite correct to say, its character is formed for *and* by it. Of a surety it is so. There is no proposition of whose truth I am so fully satisfied, as this. If the uterus acts upon the fœtus, it is equally clear that the fœtus reacts upon the uterus. Of course, both uterus and fœtus are "things of circumstance," but that has nothing whatever to do with the unquestioned truth, that the human, no less than all other animals, does of necessity play a part in the work of its own modification. Friend Chilton freely admits that a part is played by the *him*, or organisation—but then, he affirms it is not "until after birth." Now, I will suppose (what, however, I have no reasonable right to suppose) it is not until *after* birth that an important part of the animal economy, the nervous, takes any part in the formation of the animal's character. I will admit that to be a physiological fact. I will even, for the sake of placing my argument in a clear point of view, admit that the fœtus does not react at all, that it is quiescent in the fullest sense of the term—still, *after* birth organisations are not entirely quiescent. Surely if we even allow that *before* birth, what

may be called the rudiments of our several individualities, do *nothing* in the work of self-modification—the same cannot be allowed of perfect organisms, after issuing from the uterus—and yet to such an extraordinary conclusion, all parties must arrive, who think our characters formed for and not by us. The word *not*, as here used, evidently negatives the idea of *any* part being taken in the work of producing character by the individual organisms, in *any* stage of their existence.

These observations hold good, not only in reference to man, but birds, plants, or even stones. Now, I do not imagine that friend Chilton will think that by asserting, as I needs must assert, that *their* characters are formed for *and* by them, I shall give currency to an opinion in favour of their *free agency*. Man is no more a free agent, than birds or fishes, or plants, or even stones—but, like them, he necessarily performs a part in the great and unceasing work of self modification. Plants, or stones, cannot properly be called creatures, but they obviously are things of circumstance. So are men—but men, as well as plants and stones, as well as all other existences, organic or inorganic, help to produce those results of which they individually and collectively are the sign.

Friend Chilton is mistaken when he supposes "I forget" that "the original organisation at birth, is the circumstance which modifies all circumstances by which such original organisation may be surrounded. I have not forgot, and hope never to forget so important a truth—nor that other important truth, as to the extent of the influence which circumstances can produce upon the original organisation, being contingent upon the constitution of that organisation. With respect to all such questions, myself and friend Chilton are agreed—but I confess it does rather astonish me, that any one capable of appreciating socialist principles, should confound them with the utterly nonsensical proposition of man's character being formed for and *not* by him.

What is meant by this word *him*? I do not exactly know what sense or nonsense immaterialists may fix upon it, but materialists understand by *him*, the man. By *organisation*, they understand him, and by *him*, man. Now, Robert Owen himself has taught, that character is a result, but result of what? I will answer in his own words: "Organisation at birth, and the effects of external circumstances upon that organisation from birth to death, such organisation and external circumstances continually acting and reacting each upon the other."

The quotations in friend Chilton's letter, drawn from the writings of Dr. Thomas Jameson, and professor Babbage, are intrinsically valuable, but prove nothing either for or against the opinions advanced by me. I am a necessitarian, in the most rigid sense of that term, and of course agree that "man is entirely the creature of circumstances, viewed as a whole," but I do most distinctly deny that, *therefore*, we are justified in asserting "the character of man is formed for and *not* by him." Until it can be proved that the "him," from the instant it is a "him," does neither act nor react, no such assertion can be allowed in any sense, wide or narrow.

The quotation from Spinoza, too, is as little to the purpose as the others. If it justify any inference at all, it is an inference altogether opposed to the one drawn by friend Chilton. I agree with him and Spinoza, that "substance is prior to its accidents," and I agree with him that "in his case, 'the original organisation,' is substantial enough—but whether organisation be original or derived, substance or shadow, if it be capable of reacting, and does react upon all that acts upon it, of necessity it helps to modify itself, in other words, helps to form its own character.

Friend Chilton asks me how I can reconcile my assertion that man, in every stage of his existence is a result, with the opinion that man's character is formed by him, as well as for him? To which I answer, it is impossible even to conceive a result or effect (it boots not which of these terms we use) which is not itself the cause of other effects. Man is at all times both effect and cause. I am not at this instant the *same* man I was an hour ago. During the past hour, the state of my frame has been much changed, and to materialists I need hardly say, every change in the physical condition of our bodies, implies changes of our mental condition. Since taking tea, the temperature of my sensibilities has been much modified. In a sentence, my whole being is not in any one respect the same now that it was an hour since. But how has that change in myself been produced? By what process, or by what agents has my character been altered, during the



last sixty or seventy minutes? Those who tell us character is formed for and *not* by us, if consistent, would say, circumstances are the cause, they are the agents in that work—but I say, my organisation has been a considerable and efficient helper in the affair. Ah, it may be rejoined, organisation does, indeed, help, it does react—but then, the organisation is itself a circumstance. Good! so far, very good. Let it be so. Organisation shall be rated a circumstance, and men shall be rated entirely the creatures of circumstances. To all this I care not to dissent—but, though all this may be superexcellent, it is, nevertheless, superabsurd to say that the organisation which aids in the work of modifying itself, has its character formed for and *not* by itself. It is, indeed, nothing short of flat contradiction, to say, that the character of man is formed of his organisation at birth, &c., and in the same breath insist that the character of man is formed for and *not* by him.

The trouble taken by friend Chilton to show that "Man's general character materially depends upon his being soundly or unsoundly organised at birth," was quite unnecessary—as no one doubts it—at least I do not. I presume there are few persons, even among the most illiterately fanatical, and fanatically illiterate who expect cripples to run as fast as the perfectly formed, or that brains functionally diseased can perform their functions so fitly as others in a healthy condition. But I am asked, if man be "Wholly an effect, how can he likewise be an independent cause?"—to which I reply, there is not in the universe either independent cause or independent action, of course, therefore, I do not suppose man an "independent cause." He is, as friend Chilton says, "an effect," not by any means "forming an exception to the general rule."

No reasoning of mine, contained in this or any other periodical, will warrant the inference that I think man forms his own character, or that I think he has a free will. My opinion is that man aids, precisely as horses do, to modify (form, is the better understood word) his own character. *Aiding* to form anything, and forming it, are of course two very different kinds of business. And as respects free will, one might just as rationally talk about free cabbage sprouts. All forms, as all appearances, are results—and no result can either be free in will or independent in action.

In reply to the assertion, that there is not a number of this work in which I do not earnestly point attention to the important fact that man's character is formed for him, I beg distinctly to state that there is not a number of this or any other work I have been connected with, in which attention has been earnestly pointed to any such important *fallacy*. To show the "immense power" which an almost exclusive, though partial knowledge, of the influence of circumstances has thrown into the hands of priests, I am, it is true, incessantly labouring, but friend Chilton is entirely mistaken if he supposes I ever did, in a single instance, point out as an "important fact" this silly dictum about man's character being formed for and *not* by him.

With respect to the concluding portion of friend Chilton's letter, I will merely observe, that I never yet fell out with, or refused to *aid* any party "because of the unphilosophical *wording* of a sentence." Such a course of conduct would be utterly contemptible, and what is contemptible I never knowingly do. If the opinions of a party be correct I think it is comparatively unimportant what language they may be clothed in, always, however, with the proviso, that such language faithfully represents such opinions. I utterly despise a mere war of words, but it is a great mistake to suppose there can be accuracy of thought where there is gross inaccuracy of language. Lord Bacon ages ago admonished mankind that they imagined their reason governs their words, whereas it often happens that their words react upon and govern their reason. The admonition was a wise one—I never lose sight of it, and am well assured that it never should be lost sight of by those who desire to radically reform society, by purifying and strengthening THOUGHT.

perity, do not most effectually "cut its own throat." They are evidently ambitious, not merely to emulate, but outstrip in bigotted folly the Woods, Hardwicks, and Jardines, who have done so much for atheism on this side of the Tweed. Atheists have therefore much reason to be obliged, but cannot help most heartily despising and laughing at them, nevertheless. They despise persecutors, because the spirit of persecution is a spirit thoroughly despicable. They despise them, even while using them as the most convenient of "cat's paws." They laugh at their folly, because such folly is of more worth to the cause of truth than wisdom the most precious. It is evident that these *canny* magistrates will, by their present proceedings, do more to spread and ramify the principles of irreligion among all classes of the Scottish population, during the coming year, than unassisted atheists could have accomplished in the coming century. Atheists, by far the most formidable of christianity's enemies, are always sorry to feel the sting of persecution, but they know that there is no enemy from whom religion has to dread so much as he who persecutes its enemies, and madly expects to stifle, by legal enactments and bloody punishments, the expression of irreligious opinions. Yet thus are the *crafty* magistrates of Edinburgh employed. Thus do they vainly hope to maintain christianity in "all its pristine purity." Experience whispers to them in vain, that if christianity is to stand at all, it must be in its own native strength, without the "artificial aids" of bayonets and prisons. Experience whispers to them in vain that the inevitable doom of all false religions is utter extinction, and that true religions, if such religions there are, can only be vitally injured by those who take false measures for their support. Christianity *may* be true—but if it is true, what can it have to fear from its assailants? Yet how do the mob of christians act when their religion is assailed? Why just as though they thought it false. They do not seek a discussion of its merits, but to crush those who dare propose such discussion. They do not glory in, but horribly fear investigation; they do not encourage, but strangle it. Mad dogs are not more horrified at view of water than are the generality of christian people at the bare mention of free investigation upon religious topics. Is it not strangely inconsistent in protestant christians thus to act? Is it not contemptibly inconsistent in men who claim for themselves the right to judge freely of religion's merits, and reject or receive, as to them seems fit, the doctrines and practice which constitute their essentiality, to persecute others whose only crime is the having imitated *their* example? This, however, is the character of proceedings taken a fortnight since by the magistrates of Edinburgh. A friend writes me word that the shops of the two liberal booksellers in that town have been entered by the Procurator Fiscal, who seized some anti-humbug books—in other words, books of an irreligious tendency. They seized not only the books, but their owners, who, without doubt, will be brought to trial for the offence of selling publications calculated to bring the *divine* religion of Christ into contempt. They are now out on bail; but if brought to trial, and found guilty, it is hard to say what amount of *vengeance* will be inflicted upon them, as the Scottish laws are excessively stringent in respect of blasphemers and vendors of seditious or irreligious writings. The Scotch magistrates, to their everlasting disgrace, condemned Muir and others to suffer seven years' transportation for *lending* Paine's "Rights of Man."

Such being the posture of affairs in Scotland, it is time that the investigators of all countries should show a bold and determined front to their christian oppressors. The meaning of this crusade against the liberal booksellers of Edinburgh is easy to be understood. The progress of thought among our northern neighbours has struck terror into the heart of bigotry. But towards the most desperate are often desperately valorous when all means of escape are cut off, and safety can only be purchased by hard fighting. The Scotch magistrates are evidently alarmed. Infidelity of the purest kind has, during the last two years, made rapid way among the Scots. I have reason to conclude that my proposed journey to Scotland has something to do with the late scandalous outrage upon individual liberty and barefaced plunder of individual property. Great events, saith the adage, from trivial causes spring—and I think that my published intention to visit Edinburgh is one of the many "trivial causes" which have induced the Scotch Solons to earn for themselves the contempt and hatred of all who love truth, freedom, and virtue.

## IMPORTANT ANTI-INVESTIGATION MOVEMENT IN SCOTLAND.

THE magistrates of Edinburgh seem determined it shall not be *their* fault if christianity, like England's commercial pros-

I expect to be in Edinburgh on the 30th inst., and of course expect when there, to find the battle raging furiously hot. The thick of the fight will be my place of refuge. Under present circumstances the post of honour will be a public, not a private, station. This arrest of liberal publishers and plunder of their houses, I interpret to be the signal of what is intended to be a fierce and exterminating onslaught; but "Dangers retreat when boldly they're confronted; while dull delay breeds impotence and fear;" and I verily believe that if the irreligiousists of England and Scotland "keep shoulder to shoulder," if they will fight the good fight manfully, they have nothing to fear from the motley crew of religious ragamuffins, that bigotry can raise for their destruction. Christian religionists, thanks to the application of free investigation principles, partial and narrow as such application has been, may better be likened to a rope of sand than a chain of steel. They are split up into fragments innumerable.

## MATERIALISM OF ANCIENT MYTHOLOGIES.

To the Editor of the Investigator.

THE question of God's existence, on which so much has been written, so many disputes have arisen, and which has generated so much heart-burning, hatred, and malice among men—is yet unsettled, and any attempt to settle it, is thought the *ne plus ultra* of wickedness.

It is said by God-worshippers, that there is an incomprehensible power, which power originally produced, and now governs all things. Now, sir, it is evident that this supposed power, is either distinct from and independent of matter, or it is a short term expressive of the properties and qualities of matter. Sir Isaac Newton tells us, "There is no power, property, or quality, whatever, independent of substance"—if so, then it is evident that all power is material,\* or dependent on matter, and therefore comprehensible. The prime question then is—does matter exist—and if it exist, how came it into existence?

The first of these queries, sir, I shall allow Mr. Paley to answer. That "most famous of natural theologians," most confidently announces that there never was a time when nothing existed—because if time was when nothing was, nothing could rise up out of it, and per consequence, nothing could now exist—therefore that which exists at this moment, must have been through all moments—I conceive.

This reasoning of Paley's demonstrates the eternity of matter—and compels me to conclude that matter is the only thing that acts or is acted upon, in other words, the only actual existence. Yes, sir, I cannot but think that matter is eternal in its nature, infinitely various and ever-varying in appearance, never increasing or diminishing in quantity, though ceaselessly changing in form.

With regard then, to the first question, namely, Is there a God? I beg to answer it in the affirmative. There is, most assuredly, a God. But how came that God into existence? To furnish an answer to the latter question is the main design of this letter.

Materialists have written much against and about Deity—but they have almost entirely neglected the science, knowledge, and wisdom, contained in pagan mythology. They have, in my opinion, most injudiciously allowed the authors of that mythology to be grossly misrepresented by modern theologians, who either could not or would not see the fine vein of philosophy which runs through the whole substance of ancient mythologies.

Here, sir, is a magnificent and almost untouched subject for you to exercise your talent upon. Here is a wide field, in which you may operate beneficially for your own reputation as a philosopher, and even more beneficially as regards society at large. By at once entering upon the work of investigating this subject, you will create in your readers a desire for that knowledge which may be truly called "the beginning of wisdom."

A cursory glance at ancient mythologies, will teach us that pagan philosophers were incessantly occupied in veiling their vast knowledge by fable, allegory, and fiction. How

\* Power is a word expressive of what is ideal, not what is real; if so, it cannot be material. The idea of power is suggested by the action of matter, but it is not matter itself, any more than motion, mind, or time.—EDITOR.

completely they succeeded in hoodwinking the vulgar, you, sir, need not be informed.

Their custom was to deify the powers, properties, forms, and qualities of the material world. The igneous matter, the ethereal fluid, the invisible fire that vivifies all nature, that penetrates all bodies, that fertilises the earth, that is the cause of all life and motion, they personified. You have said, sir, in some part of your writings, that mistaking personifications of ideas for real existences has proved the most mischievous of all human mistakes. And such is my opinion. We know that the Romans worshipped Jupiter as father of the Gods and men, yet Jupiter, every student of nature knows, was only a personification of the igneous or fiery principle. And so of all the ancient Gods of whom such monstrous tales have been told and believed by the ignorant. They were all personifications of natural ideas, and not themselves unnatural existences. Thus considered, pagan mythology becomes a most beautiful study; and will be found to contain within a complete system of materialism. Let me hope, then, that you, sir, will no longer allow falsehood and calumny to be heaped upon that science of sciences, the science of paganism. Nothing can be more easy than to explain ancient mythology if the great principles upon which it was based are kept steadily in view.

It is evident that in ancient times the principles of nature were veiled by associating them with those personal and moral qualities which only human beings are known to possess. These personal and moral qualities were attributed to an imagined universal principle, no less than well understood local principles, but is it not evident that to attribute such qualities to the universe principle or God, was to annex to it properties altogether incompatible with any just conception of its nature? Hence all mythologic fable. This universe principle is God. The ancients knew no other, and it was entirely of their own creation. They clothed a principle with moral and personal attributes; in other words, created a real God out of conceptions purely ideal.

They personified light; they gave it the human form; they called that form Apollo, the God of Light, and to this God was given moral as well as physical qualities. His childhood, youth, marriage, and offspring, are gravely treated of. They dealt in the same manner with every phenomenon exhibited by the material world. This is the grand fountain of knowledge I have before hinted at.

Sir, I am prepared to maintain, that in such fables as are here alluded to all modern theologies rest. The knowledge possessed by the first so-called christian priests gave them power to frame a new religious system less open to detection, and far more tyrannical and unjust than the old pagan system which they subverted. Having defied the power of light and knowledge, they themselves alone possessed, called him God the father, and given him the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. The papist says to know God, you must be a God; that is, you must be a priest or man divinely inspired.

In conclusion, sir, I will observe, there is no such thing as an incomprehensible power. All power is material, and therefore comprehensible. In the hope that you will insert these hastily written, but I think useful observations, in the INVESTIGATOR, I beg to subscribe myself

A CONSTANT READER.

[In reference to the foregoing letter, I will simply observe that it is my intention to publish in this paper, so soon as other matters more pressing are disposed of, a series of articles on Mythologic History, which it is intended shall embrace all that is really important in connection with that interesting subject.—C. S.]

## REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

We are the fools of time and terror;  
Days steal on us, and steal from us;  
Yet we live, loathing our life, and dreading still to die.

Manfred.

WHEN the sage Theodorus was threatened with instant death by a Grecian tyrant, he calmly observed, "It is of little consequence whether a man rot above or below ground." Though Theodorus was an atheist, even christians must allow such contempt of death could only be allied with great nobility of thought. Unfortunately, the so-called systems of education in this nation are so glaringly defective that a virtuous con-



tempt of death, based on an accurate estimate of life's value, is seldom felt though often expressed. It would seem, indeed, to be the special business of those who *instruct* (?) us to root up or stultify every lofty sentiment, and frighten us from every kind of *dangerously* noble practice. We are to a very considerable extent scientifically made "the fools of time and terror." Lessons of cowardice are among the very first lessons children get by rote in all christian countries. In cradles they learn them, and only in the grave do they forget them. Well did Dryden write:

By education most have mislead,  
So we believe, because we have been so bred.  
The priest continues what the nurse began,  
And thus the child imposes on the man.

In nothing, perhaps, does "the child impose upon the man" so completely and so fatally as in respect of death, which priests have designated "the king of terrors." The dread of death is early fastened by those worse than vipers upon their helpless unsuspecting victims. Death, which all analogy indicates is but the negation of feeling—a mere change from the sensitive to the sensitiveless state—is pictured by gloomy bigots as a something so indefinitely terrible, that few there are whose *reason*, however matured by study, and chastened by habits of reflection, does not quail in agony before the bare recollection of it. Thus do the terrors of superstition seize upon us in the cradle—and, as Dr. Englewood well observes, "prolong our infancy to the tomb."

"Cowards," said the first of poets, "die many times before their deaths; the valiant never die but once; and of all things it seems to me most strange that men should fear, seeing that death, a necessary end, must come when it will come."

These are words worthy to be placed in the mouth of Cæsar, of him who was "the foremost man of all this world;" but Shakspeare had little sympathy with priests. He had other objects than those of feeding human credulity and exciting vain terrors. His chief object was to make men wise; whereas, the chief object of priests is to keep them what they have made them, namely, superstitious slaves—*believing* slaves, who "die a thousand deaths"—miserable "fools of time and terror," who may be said, never to live till they are either dead, or so fast asleep, that their waking thoughts are effectually blotted out from "the book and volume of their brain." But

Sleep, that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care;  
The death of each day's life; sore labour's bath;  
The balm of wounded hearts; chief nourisher in life's feast,

doth seldom bless the enthusiastically religious man. Distracted by groundless terrors, and amused by hopes equally groundless, his life is one continual round of terrible excitements, alternating with maniacal rejoicings. The priest who ought to be his preserver is his destroyer—the priest who ought to aid him in making the most of life, and smoothing his passage to the grave, is the disturber of his peace, the imposer upon his bounty, in short, the curse of his existence, who will neither suffer him to live nor to die in peace. Priests make him fearful, fanciful, whining, hypocritical, and cruel. They either keep him entirely ignorant, or corrupt his brains with false knowledge. They either teach him nothing, or what is ten thousand times worse than nothing. Those who deem these statements overcharged, should consult their catechisms, where they will find that my words convey but a faint image of priestcraft's hideousness.

A broken heart our God doth very much prize,  
A broken spirit, he never will despise.

Such is a specimen of high-church doggerel, such as may be found *galore* in sacred books, in every way fitted to keep the catechism in countenance. The poetry is worthy of the subject, and the subject no less worthy of the poetry. Both subject and poetry are admirably calculated to make those who are compelled to study and recite them, the virtue-hating, death-fearing, tools of priests.

Death is unquestionably an evil—supposing life a benefit—but life is not a benefit to all, nor always a benefit to any. Death is no evil to the man who fears not to die, and leaves naught behind he cares to live for. A short life, well spent, is infinitely preferable to a long life, ill spent. Who is there that would, if he could, stretch out his hand to receive an immortality of bondage? Ulysses preferred mortality with

Penelope, to immortality with Calypso—and wisely did he prefer to live a few years with her he ardently loved, rather than miserably exist through boundless time with her he could not love. Life is always too long when it is unhappy—and, according to my calculation, a single hour of love is worth whole years of indifference, and considerably more than an eternity of hate.

But, though no man loves to die while enjoying or capable of enjoying a happy life, there is, methinks, great comfort in the reflection that *all* die—for if nature made any invidious distinction of persons, in the particular of dying, it would much annoy those who were not among the favoured. There is, indeed, a kind of rude justice, in the decomposing operations of nature. By its irresistible and never-ceasing action are swept away the rich with the poor, the strong with the weak, the proud with the humble. It treats all equally in respect of death—though somewhat partial in its favours to the living. The man who feels the whole weight of a law, which is borne almost entirely by himself, but perhaps not at all by others, suffers a double agony—the agony such law itself causes, and the yet greater agony which rarely fails to spring from a sense of its unequal operation. The rich make laws and break them, with an almost complete impunity. They cannot, however, make a law to preserve themselves from dying. There I am wrong—they may make the law, but then they cannot make it operative. Death is the great leveller, and that truth, more than any other, reconciles me to the idea of death. The following lines from Shelley's immortal "Mab," have long been familiar to me—yet even now their remembrance never fails to excite feelings of joyous enthusiasm:

To-day  
Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze that flashes,  
Strong the arm that scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes,  
That mandate is a thunder peal, that died in ages past,  
That gaze a transient flash, on which the midnight closed,  
And on that arm the worm hath made his meal.

Yes, there is to a lover of reason and freedom, intense satisfaction in the thought that all the mummeries of tyranny, with tyrants themselves, will vanish into a nothingness obscurity.

All that live must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

Kings, priests, and even prophets, rot like their neighbours—and it may fairly be presumed that worms do not "make fish of me, and flesh of the other," but treat prophets, tinkers, and kings, in exactly the same manner.

Death is unavoidable. Let us not then imitate fools, who shrink from an inevitable fate—a fate which neither the proud nor the humble, the rich nor the poor, can rationally hope to escape—but like the sages of old, meet death with a firm and intrepid countenance, not so much as a monster to be feared, as a friend to be embraced.

No wise man would wish to live for ever, unless he could live for ever happily; and knows that if he did, his *wishes* prevail nothing against the nature of things. Addison asks in his "Cato," "Whence this secret dread and inward horror of shrinking into nought?" to which Cato is made to answer, "Tis the divinity that stirs within us." Now, not myself feeling any "secret dread and inward horror of shrinking into nought," I suppose it may be inferred that divinity does *not* stir within me, and certainly I am by no means inclined to envy those in whom it does stir. It may here be worth while to note, that undoubting christians who, like Paul, *know*, or *affect to know*, that when their earthly house of *this* tabernacle is dissolved, they will be introduced to a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; it may, I say, be worth while particularly to note how very few of good christian people who are so "cock-sure" about the matter, are at all in a hurry to quit this tabernacle. It may, indeed, I think, without scandal be affirmed, that the generality of them prefer substantial, earthly houses, made with hands, to the shadowy, unreal building of God, though made without hands; and notwithstanding the tempting promise of lease-holdership for eternity.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

TO HIS GRACE

## THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

LETTER VIII.

ACCORDING to the pious Leighton, there is nothing so immovable as a believing spirit—which opinion of his, if sound, leaves me small room to hope that any arguments of mine will move your grace's spirit, because about its *believing* character there can be no question. Other parties less liberal, or more wise, may think your grace a state cheat, one who cajoles upon principle, and, though possessed with the spirit of non-belief, yet, like the priests of old, condescends to act a believing part on the great theatre of superstition, from principles no nearer purity, and motives no more generous, than those which animate other "stage players." Let them so think. I do *not*—I credit your grace with a spirit thoroughly believing, a spirit not to be shaken by any arguments whatever. I cannot, therefore, expect to convince you that christianity's difficulties are non-get-overable. Though "one from the dead" should declare it, I am convinced your grace would not "cry content" to that which, of all possible declarations, would "grieve you most." But happily all have not quite so strong an interest in believing christianity a divine religion, as your grace—so that my objections to that most extraordinary of all religions, though scornfully rejected by you, will doubtless tell with a very considerable number of less interested christians. At least, I hope so—and having, in my former letters to your grace, commenced the good work of "showing up" christianity's difficulties, I will now, "*without* the blessing of God," continue it. Yes, I will now continue the glorious task of piling evidence upon evidence in disproof of the sacerdotal assertion that the rejectors of christianity are "without excuse," for their disbelief. I have denied, and do here most emphatically repeat the denial, that disbelief in the unhuman origin and character of *any* religion is inexcusable. But I am extremely anxious your grace should understand that it is upon arguments drawn from clear, well-authenticated evidence, I base my right to reject *in toto* the christian, in common with every other, religion, and to declare my firmly-rooted conviction that no known religion ought to be, or can be accepted as divine, by any human being, worthy the name of *rationalist*. They are all, in my judgment, utterly repugnant to pure reason. Such being my conscientious conviction, I oppose, and expose, them. I war with them both in principle and in detail. I have weighed them in reason's balance, and found them miserably wanting. In plainer words, I tell your grace, that the grand result of my religious investigations, has been to convince me that all religions may be believed true, but no religion can be proved reasonable. Now, according to my investigative principle, all opinions, whether religious or irreligious, if not reasonable, should be rejected. Christians say *their* religion is the only reasonable one. They challenge our investigation of its merits. I have now before me a book written by the Bishop of Killaloe, in which he says, it is not free investigation christians deprecate, but only hasty

and arrogant prejudgment. Your grace, no doubt, will say as much—so will almost all christians, for they are ever ready to laud free investigation in the abstract—though with notable inconsistency they are no less forward to destroy it in reality.

Now, your grace, I trust that these letters will acquit me of any desire to hastily or arrogantly prejudice the christian religion—at the same time that they clearly discover my intention to freely investigate it. If that religion is, indeed, *rational*, the sooner so important a truth becomes universally known the better. If, on the other hand, it is not a rational religion, but a religion made up of, and founded upon, sheer humbug, the sooner it is destroyed the better. Come then, your grace, "let us reason together," and at least *try* to discover, whether any rational man can honestly accept christianity as a divine religion. A religion invented by a God, taught by a God, and died for by a God.

In order to give christianity all the advantage I can, consistently with a due regard for truth, I will, for the sake of argument, suppose the Genesis and all other biblical tales *literally* true. I will suppose that "God created the heaven and the earth" out of nothing, "a long time ago"—that out of the same material he made man and woman, together with the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, all creeping things, and all the fish of the sea—that the garden of Paradise was not an imaginary, but a real, garden—that Adam, Eve, and the other "living things," were really placed in the said real garden, *as it is written*, and that the remarkable story about trees of life and knowledge, non-forbidden and forbidden fruits, the serpent's loquacity, Eve's curiosity, Adam's folly, fall, &c., is a true story, true to the very letter. All this, I will suppose, and, in addition thereto, that no book ascribed to Moses, to Joshua, or to any other "sacred" historian, should be placed upon a level with the histories of "Jack and his eleven brothers," or "Jack the Giant-Slayer," but treated in all respects as the infallible productions of men inspired by divine wisdom.

Now, I am of opinion, that in order to estimate fairly the Jewish or christian religion, it is essential to understand the character of the ideas attached by both Jews and christians to the "divine author" of their respective faiths. To that author they have given the imposing name of God—and as belief in *him* is a belief not only common but fundamental to both religions, a correct idea of *him* strikes me as being an essential preliminary to a right understanding of any religion or religions of which he was the author. To the Jews, we are told by Paul, were committed the oracles of God, that is, the portion of scriptures called Old Testament. Now, I conceive, that if we wish to know what God is, we cannot do better than consult the oracles delivered by him—for as we are enabled to judge with tolerable accuracy of a human author by the style and matter of his writings, so I suppose we may, by a careful study of the oracles that Jews tell us were committed to them, judge "near enough" of their divine author. Christ, the gospel historians tell us, strongly urged the Jews, and the gentiles also, to search the scriptures—for in them, said he, ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. Now HE was God though



wearing the human form—at least, so your grace thinks—it is therefore evident that if we are to come at a knowledge of the Jews' and christians' God, it must be by way of scripture. They are they which testify of HIM. These words every orthodox christian must believe are the words of Christ. But, though their God had not told them where he was testified of, they would have naturally, and I think properly, concluded that a book written by a God, would best exhibit a God. Indeed, if we fail to discover the peculiarities of the Jews' God in the oracles pronounced by him and committed to his chosen people, I really am at a loss to conceive in what place or books we are likely to search for such lore with any chance of success. I have already remarked that Jews and christians worship the same God. The very religion of these latter is said by themselves, to be only a new dispensation of the old Jewish religion. Yes, some of the most learned christians earnestly contend that christianity is not a new religion, but only a new dispensation of the old Jewish religion. Be this as it may, we all know that the Jehovah of the Pentateuch, the *I am that I am*, whose deeds are there recorded, has been adored as the one and only God, by both these sections of religionists. It seems however, from many books I have consulted, that the early Jews associated ideas with the character of Jehovah, very different from those deemed orthodox in our times. Of this your grace may satisfy yourself by consulting Parkhurst, Wollaston, and other learned christian authors who have professed that subject. The first-mentioned writer says, in his Heb. Lex. p. 18, of Yahouh (Jupiter) the Hebrews' Deity, that the word *Yah* means "he who is," and the word *Yéhouh* means "the Being necessarily existing," while, in the same work, the word *Aléim*, often applied to *Yéhouh*, is interpreted "the denouncers of a conditional curse." Hibbert thought this word *Aléim* was but "a sort of plural of the Arabic Allah," and it is well worthy of observation, that Parkhurst and others stoutly insist that the early Jews worshipped "a plurality of Aléim in Jehovah." Now, it cannot be denied that whether the word Jehovah signified a plurality of agents or not, there are very many scriptural passages in which it is joined with pronouns, verbs, and adjectives plural. In Gen. i. 26, for example, the reader will find that the *Aléim*, or the plurality of agents, which, according to Parkhurst, make up *Jehovah*, is made to say, "Let us (or WE will) make man in our image, according to our likeness." Again, in Eccles. xii. 1, are these words "Remember thy *Creators*."

It is upon such texts as these that Parkhurst founds his conclusion, and it must be confessed that a comparison of these texts, and many similar ones which could easily be cited, does "Denote a plurality of agents in the *Aléim*, as applied by Moses in the history of creation." Those who have been accustomed to hear a good deal of talk about the unity of the Jews' God, will, doubtless, feel both surprised and grieved when they learn that the *Yéhouh*, or Jupiter of the Hebrews, denoted a plurality of agents. Nevertheless, the "oracles of God" seem to justify the inference, but really those oracles are so very peculiar, that an industrious individual might draw from their abundance of texts, in justification of any inference, or support of any hypothesis. However, in them we must look for Jehovah's character, whether he be one or many—but before proceeding to do so, I think it may be useful to note what appears to me a characteristic of the Jews' God, markedly distinguishing him from the Gods worshipped by other more ancient people. Adam Smith, in his "Post. Essays on Philosophical Subjects," observes that :

In the first ages of the world, the seeming incoherence of the appearances of nature, so confounded mankind that they despaired of discovering in her operations any regular system. Their Gods though they were apprehended to interpose upon some particular occasions, were so far from being regarded as the creators of some world that their origin was apprehended to be posterior to that of the world. The earth, according to Hesiod, was the first production of the chaos. The heavens arose out of the earth, and from both together all the Gods who afterwards inhabited them. Nor was this notion confined to the vulgar, and to those poets who seem to have recorded the vulgar theology. . . . . The same notion of the origin of the world was embraced (as Aristotle tells us) by the early pythagoreans, . . . . . Mind and understanding, and consequently Deity, being the most perfect, were necessarily, according to them, the last productions of nature. For in all other things what was most perfect they observed always came last, as in plants and animals, it is not the seed that is most perfect, but the complete animal with all its members in the one; and the complete plant with all its branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits in the other.

ancients; for if nothing was before chaos, as they evidently thought, and if not only the earth and the heavens, but even the Gods, who were afterwards imagined to inhabit them, were produced from chaos, it is plain they could not have believed in a creator of chaos—in other words, they could not have believed in a God anterior to chaos who by his word called it out of nothing. Now christians tell me that Moses *did* believe in a God who not only *formed* the heavens and the earth, but *created* them, that is, produced them out of nothing. The Gods of ancient nations, it seems arose out of the heavens and the earth, whereas christians declare that the earth and the heavens arose out of God. But it is easy to see that a God who owed his existence to prior existences must be fictional. Such a God would be no God at all. No, the christians do well to make their God an undervived, self-existent Being. I have already remarked that the word *Yéhouh* means "the Being necessarily existing." Now, such was the God worshipped by the early Jews, and such I presume is the God *now* worshipped by both Jews and christians. Neither Jews nor christians can suppose that their God, the universe creating "I AM," arose out of previously existing matter, as Venus is fabled to have arose out of the previously existing sea. No, *he*, if anything more than a "a nonentity inscribed with a very formidable name," must have been *before* the universe, for how else could he have created it? Those who assert a chaos, with *nothing* before it, however they may talk about a God or Gods, must be atheists, the assertion of a non-beginning universe involving the denial of one or many creators.

Now, as I have not the slightest desire to prove Moses atheistical, I will consent to attach the meaning vulgarly attached to his, and all other sacred historians, words. When, for example, I read about Jehovah creating the heavens and the earth, and about his existing before all the worlds, I conclude the text to mean that he was before everything, and really did produce everything (the heavens and the earth including all) out of nonentity or nothing; in short, that Moses and the prophets were not atheists, but *bona fide* believers in at least one God. The character of that God is what I desire to place before your grace. His character as pronounced in his own oracles, in those very oracles which we are instructed to believe were committed to the Jewish people. Perhaps the oracular tale about the hard-hearted Pharaoh may serve better than any other *single* tale to illustrate a few special idiosyncracies of the great Jehovah.

Every bible-reader knows that God selected a peculiar people from among all other people; that he exalted that people at the expense of many others; that he covenanted with Abraham to make of his seed a great nation; that after the death of that famous patriarch, the Jews, for thus are the favourites of Jehovah *now* called, suffered many mishaps, until, at the death of Joseph, Abraham's great grandson, they settled down into a state of ignoble bondage to their enemies, the Egyptians.

Your grace will please to remember that I do not pledge myself for the truth of any biblical narratives, but am content to take them as I find them, and argue from them as though they were true. Unless this be well understood, what I am now attempting to do cannot be understood at all. Your grace is probably informed that some writers deny that there ever was a nation of Jews prior to the time of Alexander the Great. They say that the term Jew, and the name of the country Judea, are from the same derivation, and that the Asiatic mode of expressing the word Jew would correspond with the Jewish expression of the name of God, *Yéhouh* or *Yew*. These writers farther assure us that the land of Judea is also an expression of the land of the God, *Io*, or *Yahouh*, or *Yu*, and is a modern name given to a small spot of the earth just before the christian era, since the time of Alexander the Great, and was a part of the surrounding desert, in and through which the monks of Egypt were allowed to spread themselves, and to form their various sects, in the name of the common God of mankind.\* Be it, therefore, distinctly understood, that though, for the sake of argument, I shall treat the tale about Pharaoh and other biblical tales of similar stamp, as literally true, I am not to be considered as believing a single word of any one of them. It is ample for my present purpose to direct your grace's attention to the oracles of your God, as they stand, without apologising for, explaining away, adding to, or subtracting from them one tittle. I will accept

them in their clear and obvious sense, as the records of a God, written by a God. I will interpret every line as I conceive every christian must interpret it, and thus endeavour to attain a clear idea of the God they call on me to believe in and adore.

Now, I read in the book of Exodus an account of the birth and adventures of an individual called Moses, to whom "The angel of the Lord appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush;" which angel, however, it seems from a subsequent part of the text, was not an angel at all, but the great Jehovah or God himself; for I read that when Moses looked and behold the bush burned with fire, and yet was not consumed; he said (unto himself, I presume), "I will now turn aside and see this great sight; why the bush is not burnt." Whereupon, when the lord (*not* the angel) saw that he (Moses) turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said "Moses, Moses." And Moses said, "Here am I." It further appears from the text that God held a regular conversation with the man Moses; and said, after announcing himself as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, "I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows," adding, "I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now, therefore, behold the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me; and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come, now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, and thou mayst bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt."

But notwithstanding the flame-like appearance of the bush, and this divine discourse which issued therefrom, Moses was very sceptical, as appears from his presumptuous question to his creator, "Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Now, none but a very sceptical or very stupid person could have dared to put such a question to God, as it clearly implies either want of faith or want of understanding. The text, however, does not inform us that God was either surprised or angered by this question and questionable speech of Moses, but at once replied, "Certainly, I will be with thee," &c., then, after telling Moses who he, the Lord God was, and many other things of considerable importance, he closes his discourse with these remarkable words, "And I will stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof; and after that he (Pharaoh) will let you (the people of Israel) go. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, ye shall not go empty. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians."

Thus spake (as I read) the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth; and which every good christian, at least twice a day, declares "art in heaven." There are some folks, I may remind your grace, who think it a trumped-up story, and doubtless all would think so, were it not found among "the oracles of God," but being there, all who have a "believing spirit" know it to be true. But if we are surprised to read about a God who talks thus familiarly with man; making "no bones" about explaining who he is, what he has done, what he is going to do, &c., who talks about "smiting with wonders," and coolly recommends one set of his creatures "to spoil" another set, if, I say, we are surprised when we read of the great *I am* that *I am* doing such surprising things; what can measure our astonishment when we read that the man Moses, after *hearing* it all, was still incredulous, still unable to understand how that which God told him to do, could be done; and answering, he said, "But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." As, however, all this is divinely oracular, I presume that your grace, and other equally sound christians, however astonished will not cease to believe every syllable of it.

This is of course only an introductory portion of the tale about "Pharaoh," but I cannot now find room for more. Here, however is enough to call for a few comments.

To those individuals who are not blessed with a "believing

spirit," this portion of scripture must seem far more derogatory than honourable to the character of God; for *he* is here represented as a mere local Deity, who is reduced to the necessity of using human instruments in order to effect his purposes. The idea of a God who talks to one man about "coming down" to deliver other men is rather more ridiculous than sublime. If there is a God, he may be abased, but cannot be exalted by such puerilities.

Who, without a "believing spirit," can suppose that a being capable of *creating* the universe, ever used such language as is ascribed to the Pentateuch Jehovah. If an unnatural Being *created*, he surely could not have lacked power to wisely govern, the universe. Whatever is must be precisely as he willed it to be, "when time was not." It is ridiculous to suppose the universe was produced out of nothing by an intelligent Being distinct from itself, while we assert that there is aught in the universe contrary to the will of that Being. A Deity shorn of his omnipotence would sink beneath the level of our poor humanity. The idea of a God who talks about "smiting people with wonders," who comes down from heaven to take part in the miserable battles of his miserable creatures, and teaches those creatures to hate, spoil, or destroy each other, is really shocking. It is an idea at once the most shocking, ludicrous, and demoralising that human beings can possibly entertain. Some one has said that God should never be made to play a part on the stage of human affairs, except for purposes worthy of a God; but I should like to know how any part can be worthy of a God, that all would acknowledge unworthy of a man. To smite, deceive, rob, and destroy, are acts altogether unworthy of men, and yet men have not hesitated to ascribe such acts to their Gods. They have made the extraordinary mistake of supposing they could honour their Gods by crediting them with those detestable passions which raged within their own breasts. Who is there can read the foregoing account of God's interview with Moses, without feeling that if a God exist he cannot be honoured and therefore cannot be gratified by such recitals? What ideas can they suggest save false ones? and as by universal acknowledgment, it is far better not to think of God at all, than to think evil of him, surely it is high time an end was put to such blasphemies; for if any words can be blasphemous, these are of the number. Yes, the ascribers to unnatural beings characters they would blush to have ascribed to themselves, are the most abominable of blasphemers, who if there is a "living God" have ample reason to dread falling into his hands.

I am, with all due respect,

Your grace's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.

## PUSEYISM AND PROTESTANTISM.

THESE are stirring times, and pleasant as stirring to the lovers of excitement, together with a little "hurly burly" innovation. The Young Rapids of politics may now "push on keep moving," to their hearts' content. Novelty after novelty is broached, opinion treads upon the heels of opinion. Finality is quite out of the question. No one dreams of it, and save and except my Lord John Russell, nobody is silly enough to talk about it. The march of innovation is so forced, that like a lucky thief in the night, no one knows whence it cometh or whither it goeth. Institutions may almost be likened to "trees walking," so completely are they kept on the go, or rather swept away with the weather-beaten opinions on which they have for ages reposed. But it is with religion that innovation is making such terrible havoc. Without exaggeration it may be affirmed that a religious revolution is at hand. Look at the church of this country. On every hand it turns for friends, and on every hand it finds a foe. From all sides it receives "heavy blows and sore discouragement." If ever there was a period when the cry of "church in danger" might honestly be raised, it was surely during the past year; but it is now too late for churchmen to raise so stale a cry. They raised it so often when nothing was to be apprehended, that now they have everything to apprehend, bawl as they may, none will rush to their assistance. The boy of fable who cried "wolf, wolf," when no wolf was nigh, found, when the wolf *did* come, that all his cries could not raise him a single friend. Just so with the bawlers about "church in



danger." They bawled so lustily when it was *out of danger* that no one heeds them now that it is *in danger*. Judging from late results and present appearances, I should say that the protestant church had better at once make its will, and prepare to be buried decently. The elements of destruction are within and without it. They are ramified through every inch of its rotten carcase. Puseyism was intended to re-invigorate it, but alas, that hell's pavement should consist of good intentions. Had Dr. Pusey and his tractarian cabal whistled to the wind, they would at least have been harmlessly employed, but in their awkward, though doubtless well-intended, attempts to reform, or rather to un-reform the church, they have given it the "unkindest cut of all." Oh, base, viper-like varlets, to sting the very bosom on which they repose, and from whence they draw their nutriment! For churchmen to war with the church, while partaking of its benefits, is, to use the fine phrase of Shakspeare, as though the mouth should tear the hand, for lifting food to it. But puseyites, though ungrateful blockheads, are doing the work of usefulness. They are shaking the pillars of protestantism and disturbing the very foundations of christianity. This is work for which the atheist will thank, though he despises, them. He thinks that the sooner christianity and all other religions are swept from the earth the better, and he therefore hails with rapturous delight the new tractarian movement.

The avowed object of Pusey and his followers is to *unprotestantise* the church—to undo all the good as well as mischief that was done at the Reformation—to quash the right of private judgment—and inspire in every christian breast a holy zeal in the great work of destroying heresy and extirpating heretics. He who may be called the patron saint of puseyites, was the famous Archbishop Laud, whose christianity may be judged of from his memorable declaration, that he hoped to live to see the day when no Jack-gentleman in England should dare to stand uncovered in the presence of a parish priest. Now, the spirit of Laud is the spirit of puseyism. It is a selfish, deceitful, proud, bigotted, and cruel spirit. Of course such a spirit is antagonistic to anything like rationality and freedom.

But though the supporters of puseyism are by no means remarkable for sense, and rather mollycoddleish, they are shrewd enough to discover what must be the ultimate effect of even that *partial* action upon the right-of-private-judgment-principle, vouchsafed to the people of these realms. They seem perfectly to understand that no religion could long co-exist with a consistent action upon that principle. They, therefore, insist that it is only the successors of the apostles, that is, our law-established clergy, who are competent to judge of religious truth. They spurn at the idea of each individual christian finding for himself in scripture his rule of faith. They insist that scripture can only be understood by those who were appointed to understand it, and of course can only be expounded by those who were appointed to expound it. They scorn the lukewarm kind of religion with which the church now doses the people. So sure are they that men can never reason themselves into a belief of christianity's vital doctrines, that they lay it down as truth indisputable, that we are called upon to *maintain* before we *prove*, and to *believe* before we *judge*. Vulgar reasoners commonly judge first and then believe, prove first and then maintain; but puseyites are not vulgar reasoners. They are super-sublimated fanatics, who would throw us back upon all the *advantages* of the dark ages, and by frauds upon human credulity supersede protestantism by popery in its most hideous form. But it cannot be. Mohammedanism has been described as a kind of bastard judaism that came six hundred years too late into the world; and with equal propriety I think it may be said that puseyism is a species of bastard popery that came at least three centuries too late into the world—for a set of opinions better adapted to formerly prevailing, and more hostile to now prevailing, civilisation, it would be difficult to conceive. Nevertheless, puseyism should be viewed by all radical reformers in the light of a precious boon. The effects to which it has given birth are at once staggering and portentous. It has already much damaged the church, and will damage it much more. Whatever splits up religious factions is a benefit to the aggregate of society. The shield of irreligion is the disunion of the religious. Nor am I acquainted with any set of doctrines and practices so likely to multiply atheists as those enforced and pursued by the tractarians. Their doctrine is bigotted as it is false. Their practice is hypocritical as it is cruel. They rail against dissent, while them-

selves among the most active of dissenters. They rail against the church, while eating its bread. They rail against those who, in the least degree, persecute *them*, while, at the very same instant, they laud the desire to extirpate heretics as a "holy feeling." Never, perhaps, was any line of conduct more base, more reptile-like, than that adopted by Dr. Pusey towards Dr. Hampden. It appears from the "Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette," of Saturday, 10th May, 1843, that on February 7th, 1836, a board of the heads of houses was summoned at the request of Dr. Pusey and others, to consider about the propriety of taking some steps to prevent the appointment of Dr. Hampden to the chair of divinity. That, on Friday, the 4th of March, the heads of colleges proposed that nothing should be done until after Dr. Hampden's inaugural lecture, appointed for March 17th. That, on Monday, the 7th March, a requisition was presented to the board, signed by Dr. Pusey and others, giving the board until the following day to frame a penal statute, and refusing to wait until Dr. Hampden had been heard in his defence, and that on March, the 10th, the following was issued by Dr. Pusey and others, in justification of the course to which they had driven the executive board of the university:

Extracts from a declaration upon the nature and tendency of the publications of Dr. Hampden, March 10th, 1836, signed by E. B. Pusey and J. H. Newman, &c.

"We cannot allow any explanation of insulated passages or particular words to be valid in excuse against the positive language, the systematic reasonings, and the depreciating tone with which, in Dr. Hampden's works, the articles of the church are described as mere human speculations.

"We hold that the frame of mind which could produce and send forth such statements is in itself a complete disqualification for the grave and responsible office of presiding over our academical studies in divinity, and consequently of guiding the religious instruction of half the country."

"The proctors having placed their *veto* on the proposed statute, a second address was circulated after the delivery of the inaugural lecture, of which the following is an extract:

"Painful as it is to touch on such a subject, the committee (Dr. Pusey, Mr. Newman, Mr. Sewell, and three others) are bound to declare that if reasons before existed for urging an expression of public distrust, without awaiting Dr. Hampden's explanation, they are now, if possible, in greater force."

And again:

"The question was always felt to be one which could not be legitimately affected by any explanation whatever."

A writer in the Oxford Chronicle thus remarks upon this puseyite procedure:

"And now Dr. Pusey calls for 'definite propositions,' complains of condemnation without a hearing, of unstatutableness and injustice! If the proceedings are unstatutable, let them be appealed from; if the statute is unjust, let it be abolished; but let not the opinions of the members of convocation and others be conceded to one who has good reason to exclaim, taking even his own view of the case '*quam temeré in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam*.' Passing strange, indeed, is this! Seven years ago, men who were then conspiring against the church, and bound together by the common determination to '*unprotestantise*' it—Dr. Pusey, Mr. Newman, and Mr. Sewell—the result of whose labours are seen in bitterness, and strife, and the *cursing* of protestants, sat in judgment upon and condemned, unheard, Dr. Hampden."

Such are the first public acts of the *unprotestantisers* and would be *paperisers* of Oxford. Like every other off-shoot of the great tree of superstition, they are rankly poisonous. They commenced their holy crusade by an attack on individual liberty of expression, which it must be allowed was a fitting and consistent commencement of their demoralising work. Dr. Pusey condemned his fellow-christian, Dr. Hampden, unheard, and now, forsooth, whines, and babbles, and protests against being himself condemned unheard. He complains, poor, pious, man, of not being confronted with his accusers; having, I presume, totally forgotten that he and his despicable clique would not suffer Dr. Hampden to be confronted with *his* accusers. Dr. Pusey says, in his "Protest" against the vice-chancellor's decision in the late sermon affair, "I have again and again requested that definite propositions, which were thought to be at variance with our formularies, should, according to the alternative in the statute, be proposed;" but when Dr. Hampden again and again requested a like favour,



under like circumstances, this very Pusey, together with his tractarian satellites, would not hear of such a request being complied with. In Dr. Haunpden these pious scoundrels "Felt the question to be one which could not be legitimately affected by any explanation whatever;" but now that *their* question is felt to be one which cannot be legitimately affected by any explanation whatever, they shriek out their complaints with all the fury and bitterness of disappointed viragos. Now that "the poisoned chalice is returned to their own lips," they relish it not. Being compelled to drink the very dregs of their own cup of intolerance, they make up all manner of wry faces, and indulge their galled pride by all manner of vituperation. Verily, what they have meted unto others is now being meted unto themselves. Just is the retribution; and my hearty hope is that all who persecute may be mercilessly persecuted—that gibbet may answer gibbet, as argument alone should answer argument. Think and let think, speak and let speak, act and let act—that is the principle which should rule supreme in all that relates to speculative dogmas.

If upstart heretics and flaming bigots, such as these Puseyites, are determined to persecute all not such "thrice-tripled asses" as themselves, I am one of those who would willingly aid to give them "a bellyful" of such persecuting provender. If they are determined to unsheathe the sword, let them perish by it; and, by all that is true, I should think infinitely less of slaying a whole army of conscience-enslaving priests, than I would of destroying an equal number of calves. The persecutor is a villain, and should be dealt with as such. I consider it as much a duty to resist persecution, and if that fail to destroy the persecutor, as I feel it to be a duty to destroy, or aid in destroying, mad dogs. Killing would not be murder in such a case; and I am convinced that religionists of the persecuting school, who are in general no less cowardly than bigotted, would soon be sick of meddling with consciences or persons if their own useless carcasses were made to pay a heavy penalty. Persecution is the whistle of religious bigots, and, "by all the Gods at once," I would if I could make them pay most sweetly for it. The puseyites teach that the desire to extirpate heretics, that is, all who do not think precisely as they do, is a "holy feeling." The feeling being holy, they argue they would deem action in harmony with that feeling, "holy action." If that wretched sect had power at command, who can doubt their willingness to exercise it in the holy work of putting down heresy, by fire, or by faggot, by knife, by halter, or by dungeon? If armed with authority, they would issue the high command, "Sword go through the land, and cleanse it from its pollutions." Then would be enacted scenes of blood, such as we are startled and palled by the description of in the records of olden time. Who can mark the boundaries over which men will *not* pass who are agitated by the desire to dictate belief, and by force to establish seeming uniformity of opinion? No man. Like every other mad desire, it sticks at nothing that will contribute to its own gratification. To reason with persecutors of the puseyite sect is throwing reason away—a mere chucking of pearls to swine. Their contempt for reason is sovereign. They abhor reason, and glory in the expression of their abhorrence. We might, indeed, as well "Go reason with the mountain pines, and ask why they wag their high tops when fretted by the gusts of heaven." We might as well "Go reason with the wolf, and ask why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb," as reason with puseyites about intellectual freedom, or ask why they dare to demand for themselves "the right of private judgments," while they condemn its exercise in others. No, no! The only reasoning likely to convince *them* is that very reasoning they would, if they dare, use for the conversion of their opponents. A reasoning made up of *iron-boot, thumb-screw, rack, prison, fine, and faggot* arguments. They tell us we must *believe* before we *judge*; and I tell them that they must *be made to feel* before they can *understand*.

Like every other persecuting sect, the puseyites are contemptible in point of intellect. Nothing whatever has been written by a tractarian, that a well-trained school boy would not deem himself disgraced if reputed the author of. I have now before me "Outlines of Two Sermons," the one delivered by Mr. Newman, at St. Mary's, Oxford, May 14, and the other by Mr. Sewell, at the same place, on the 29th May. Now these two gentlemen rank among the most able of tractarians. Sewell is a professor of moral philosophy. Of Newman I know nothing more than that he is a Fellow of

Oriel, with B.D. tacked to his name, to which might appropriately be added, Dr. Pangloss's significant title of A.S.S. This sermon certainly ranks among the most droll it has been my fortune to hear or read. Nothing could be more appropriate than this sermon, except, indeed, the text on which it was founded. "I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me," from the 2nd of Kings, ii. 9, by which (I judge from the sermon itself) the preacher meant *the spirit of drollery*. One passage from the introduction will probably induce all readers to judge likewise:

Contrast between Elijah and Elisha. Elijah was pretty much of a hermit, wearing a leathern girdle, and living retired from the world, except on special occasions, in dens and rocks—but Elisha mingled with courts and princes, and was associated with all the political movements of the day. Elijah was like Melchisedec, "without beginning of days, or end of life" (!) nevertheless he was not so great a personage as Elisha, because he was only a type of John the Baptist, who always wore a leathern girdle, and frequented the river Jordan—whereas Elisha was a type of whom? Of Christ? No, my brethren, but of successors of Christ and his apostles!! But do the scriptures say that Elisha was a type of these successors? No, but the silence of scripture is no proof that he was not (!), for he must be a type of somebody, and where can the antitype be found but in the successors of the apostles?

Verily, this is a droll sermon—a sermon in every way fit to be *maintained before proved, and believed before judged*. It is nonsensically perfect, and perfectly nonsensical. An admirable exhibition of the

Dark lantern of the spirit,  
That none sees by save he who bears it.

As the reader will presently discover, Professor Sewell's sermon is droll enough, but does not quite come up to this. Indeed, Newman must, "from this time forth," rank as chief droll of Oxford University. How curious is the idea that Elisha "must be a type of somebody," and as he was not the type of Christ, of *course* he was the type of his successors and apostles. The scriptures, to be sure, say nothing about such typeship—but then, this droll sermoniser insists that "The silence of scripture is no proof that Elisha was not" the type of these successors. How logically, too, he proves that as "Elisha *must* be a type of somebody," the successors of the apostles *must* be the antitype—*because* if they are not the antitype, "where is the antitype to be found?" Of a truth, this is typing antityping, and proving with a vengeance. Having determined that Elisha *must* be a type of somebody, and finding that scripture does not say he was the type of anybody, this A.S.S. concludes that Elisha could have had no other antitype than "the successors of the apostles!"

In another part of this *convincing* sermon, we are told that Elisha began his course in the river Jordan, and modern priests, that is, the antitypes, begin theirs in the holy water of baptism—that they (Elisha and modern priests, *alias*, successors of the apostles) are alike in the discernment of spirits—for Elisha looked on the face of Hazael till he wept, because he saw what cruelties he would perpetuate if he became king—and Peter discerned the spirit of Ananias—and his successors had a remarkable power of discerning heretics—and that they resemble each other, in the sanctity associated with relics—for a man was raised to life by touching the relics of Elisha—Peter passing by overshadowed the sick—and Paul's aprons and handkerchiefs expelled evil spirits.

What can be "the frame of mind" of the individual who concocted this sermon, or whether his mind has any frame at all, I pretend not to understand—but I do fully understand that the author of such a sermon would be far more usefully employed if weeding some gardens attached to our lunatic asylums, than babbling so droll a species of divinity as this from church pulpits. Really there must be something in the air of Oxford disposing men to accept as divine truth the most revolting absurdities. It is, indeed, astonishing that in this, the nineteenth century, any individual, who has received an academical education, should have the assurance, or the stupidity, to get up and talk about the "sanctity associated with relics"—men raised to life by touching an old Jew's rotten bones—"overshadowing the sick," and "expelling evil spirits" by "aprons and handkerchiefs." A writer in the "Weekly Dispatch" lately observed, "It is a settled maxim in all countries, that the clergy of all denominations are, at least a century behind the community in civilisation and knowledge." Now, some may think this an exaggerated estimate of clerical *lagnolitysm*, but if our Puseys and Newmans may be taken as only the approximation to a fair sample of



our average clerical intelligence, the estimate is far under the true mark. There is not, I believe, in the three kingdoms, a thinking mechanic, who could not write a sermon infinitely more sensible and useful than this of Newman's. Nor is that of Professor Sewell's much better. Sewell is no less than a professor of moral philosophy. If we may believe the Oxford Chronicle, he has derived his morality from the Irvingites, better known, and perhaps better appreciated, as the *unknown tongue*—but, whether derived from that, or any other source less pure, it is certainly the oddest kind of moral system that ever hung together. I am told it consists in three laws, to which implicit unreasoning obedience is to be paid—*first*, the authority of parents—*next*, regal authority—and *then*, as in a circle embracing these, *church*, or rather, *clerical authority*. In his moral system, clerical authority will, in fact, embrace, or rather *hug* all other authorities, very much in the same manner that strong and hungry bears hug unfortunate individuals, who happen to fall within range of their paws. He wishes to render it imperative that the bible should be read, received, and (if possible) understood through the regularly ordained clergy alone. By regularly ordained clergy, of course I mean “the successors of the apostles”—“Elisha's antitype,” whose shirts, garters, and kerchiefs, ought to, if they do not, expel evil spirits, whose relics ought, and by believers may be expected, to make the dead, who are lucky enough to touch them, quick again—seeing that a man was *positively* raised to life by touching the relics of Elisha, and seeing that that fine old fellow who “Mingled with courts and princes, and was associated with all the political movements of his day,” *was* their type. Professor Sewell, like his associates in the work of *unprotestantising*, is high church to the back-bone. He venerates the memory of Laud, to whose principles he is thoroughly devoted, and whose practice he is only waiting a favourable opportunity to imitate. In an address of his published some time since, he haughtily declared, that :

To the bishops and parochial clergy the souls of this (christian, I presume) people are entrusted, and none can have any right to interfere with their province, or assume their duties. The first great breach which Rome made in the apostolical polity, and thus in the apostolical doctrines of the church, was by trespassing on the functions of the regular ministry of Christ, and substituting self-created societies, and irregular missionary efforts for a parochial system controlled by bishops, and for the ordinary ministrations of the clergy. And perhaps no greater curse can fall upon a church than to create within it, for religious objects, any machinery, however weak at first, which may ultimately escape from the controul of the church (the clergy) supersede its office, and originate a schism. That *this sin* may never be committed by us is our daily prayer.

This is plain language. Rather too plain, perhaps, for the friends of missionaryism. Viewing Mr. Sewell as the mouth-piece of the puseyite faction, his words assume an importance no one under other circumstances would dream of attaching to them. They teach us how little dissenters, or mere “wheel-within-wheel” christians, have to expect from Oxford tract men, should the latter succeed in their present bold attempt to *unreform* the church. Christian missions have hitherto been pointed at by all classes of protestants as among the most glorious results of their divine religion; nor *until now* have “missionary efforts” the least regular been viewed in the light of a “trespass on the functions of the regular ministry of Christ.” Not myself knowing or caring anything about “the regular ministry of Christ,” I obviously am not prepared to say what is or is not a trespass upon its functions; but I *am* prepared to say that the aggregate of christian missionaryers are the veriest humbugs with which this planet is infested; mere vagabonds, who, having the “gift of the gab,” and no other useful gift whatever, contrive to “fare sumptuously every day” in other countries, at the expence of their hard-working dupes in this. The average of them are *lazy* soundrels who have an inclination to travel at other people's expence; and having just wit enough to turn religious folly to account, their inclinations are gratified. Shoals of such vermin are annually sent in every direction “to convert the heathen,” and at the same time demoralise him and pick his pocket. If the heathens were wise they would *japon* every christian missionary caught mawmoring among them. If the heathens were to come here and pester us about their nonsensical superstitions, and would not desist when required to do so, why we should very properly fasten them in the stocks, or dip them in horseponds, or, what would be better still, ship them back to their own “truly religious part of the world.” Just so I recommend heathens to deal with those

two-legged nuisances called christian missionaryers, who not only annoy by their pious officiousness the more sensible natives of heathen climes; but by bringing the European character into contempt, wherever they set their feet, are really raising insuperable obstacles to the advance of civilisation in those countries. They are, as is well known, employed by bodies of individuals, who call themselves “christian missions.” Some of those individuals are no doubt very sincere; but the bulk of them are mere sharpeners—fellows, who have not “faith as a grain of mustard seed” in anything save their own interests, who “plunder widows' houses, and missions,” because such missions are instruments by the dexterous use of which they can realise fortunes at the expence of credulous sincerity. I do, therefore, “rejoice greatly” that puseyites *intend* to put an extinguisher upon missionaryism; or, missionaryism of the *irregular* kind. All is to be done by and by, *comme il faut*. Parochial systems, controlled by bishops, are to supersede “irregular missionary efforts.” So far good. If we and the heathen *are* to be fleeced and humbugged, let it at least be done by fit persons; those who are “orthodoxly appointed,” and not by a set of hungry trespassers on the regular ministry of Christ. I agree, too, with Professor Sewell, that no greater curse can fall upon a church than to create within it for religious objects, any machinery, however weak at first, which may ultimately escape from the controul of the church, supersede its office, and originate a schism. Indeed, it has ever appeared to me that if we are to have a state church at all, it is the state's duty to watch over its interests, and see that its office is not superseded, and schisms originated; but then I hold that religion should not be a state, but simply an individual, concern. If churches were schools of science, they might, and ought to be, national schools; schools for all, paid for *by* all; but churches are schools of superstition; “schools for grown children,” where nothing is taught but the unteachable, nothing comprehended but the incomprehensible, and nothing intelligent but the unintelligible. There is *but one* science, as there is *but one truth* and *one* nature, but of religions there are many. Their name is *legion*. Which of them is right, or whether any of them is right, are problems some solve this, and some that way. The more men write, speak, and think about science, the clearer their conceptions of its principles, its details, and its uses. The more men write, speak, and think about religion, the wider are their conceptions of either its uses, its details, or its principles.

Religion has, in all ages, occupied the thoughts of men, and yet it is only necessary that we consult the writings of those deemed sagest, to convince ourselves that, sage as they were, they could tell us nothing about religion of the slightest value. It is impossible for human tongue to depict, or hand to describe, the sufferings of our race, which spring directly from false religions—and yet, notwithstanding our boasted science, our progress in the arts, our revelations from God, &c., there cannot, perhaps, be found in Europe, at this moment, a score of individuals who entirely agree in their idea of what constitutes true religion. Popish and reformed christians have been long before the world. The first more than a thousand years, the second more than three centuries—yet at this very instant is our country, nay, all Europe, torn by christian dissension, and disgraced by christian intolerance. Everywhere is to be seen dissent from law-established religious doctrine. Dissent is not only without, but it rages fiercely within, the church. What are puseyites but dissenters? What are the Sewells and Newmans, but spiritual rebels?—men who “set up their small discourse of reason,” in opposition to that church they have *sworn* to strengthen and support. What are they in the church's eye but perfured heretics—who, while dissenting from a doctrine, yet have the almost unparalleled meanness, occasionally to *seem* convinced of its truth? If men ever are to open their eyes, now is surely the time for them to do so. Protestantism is fast sinking, and the question is, whether *popery* in a *puseyite dress*, shall or shall not rise upon its ruins? Mr. Sewell, in the sermon referred to above, launched some fearful invective against the breeders of schism in the church. The Oxford Chronicle, in its notice of the sermon, observes, that “Mr. Sewell laboured to form an anti-protestant schism in the church, of course, is very severe against schism, and directed a large portion of the first part of his discourse to the denunciation of this evil—he urged upon his auditory to avoid entering in the way of temptation to this sin—not to form any association, or even acquaintance, with those who do not

belong to the church—and supported his exhortation by a text, ‘Look not upon the wine when it is red.’ [He did not say “Honour all men.”] Again, he repeated, schism is a deadly sin—and cautioned them against going into places of assemblage or worship other than the church—they must not act upon the desire of curiosity, from the suggestion of their own hearts, in listening to any who lay claim to the prophetic office—quoting here the saying of the pretended prophet in scripture, ‘I am a prophet a prophet as thou art, &c., but he lied unto him.’”

The Oxford Chronicle not being a puseyite print, as in duty bound, sneers at all this. Its editor informs us that “Mr. Sewell’s style is in some measure formed upon his theory”—that he is not a severe logician—that he cannot appeal to the understanding, &c., as though sermons ever were intended to be either severely logical, or appeals to the understanding. A good sermon *may*, it is true, be perfectly logical without much mischief; but an understandable sermon would be “prodigious.” But though neither Professor Sewell nor any other professor of christianity or moral philosophy cannot legitimately be found fault with for treating cavalierly the understandings of their hearers, or being loosely logical, he is certainly open to well-merited animadversion for condemning schism wholesale and retail, while himself a schismatic. If schism is “a deadly sin,” he is unquestionably among the most deadly of sinners. It is true that he takes much pains in his sermon to show by words his entire and devoted respect for the church. “Let us not (said he) ask after the blemishes and defects of our blessed church, our spiritual mother, nor reproach her. If tempted to examine her conduct, let us think to ourselves thus: We are about to sit in judgment upon a parent—she who brought us to Christ in baptism—who nursed us, instructed us, bore with our waywardness—sat by the bedside of our fathers, and who has set us beside the blessed angels—who has erected this place (St. Mary’s Church), above all, where we may hear her blessed precepts. Let us think how often she called to us, and we refused—stretched out her hands and we regarded not. If we, seeing her in her weakness, ridicule her, the curse shall be inflicted upon us which shall make the ears of all who hear it tingle.”

Now, it is hardly believable that the man who concocted this respectful kind of church rigmarole, should be labouring incessantly to destroy that church—yet such is the fact. The church of England has no enemies more insidious, and from whom she has so much to fear, as that very religious faction, at the head of which stands Professor Sewell. Whatever he may think of himself, the public will not fail to brand him and his allies as despicable deceivers. They have declared their intention to unprotestantise the church. They have declared that a protestant church is no church at all. They have shaken the authority of that church to its very centre, and yet, in the spirit of jesuits, the most barefaced palaver in their sermons about covering the defects and concealing the blemishes of their “spiritual mother.” Verily, the Jesuits are wronged by a comparison with tractarian schismatics.

## REFLECTIONS ON DANCING.

BY AN INVESTIGATOR.

THE dance is an agreeable motion of the body, adjusted by art, to the measures of a piece of music, either sung or played.

According to mythologic writers, the Curetes first invented the dance to amuse the infant Jupiter, or rather (for he must have been a very cross child) to drown his cries with the noise and clash of their swords beating against their bucklers; for in those days the accompagniements were rude enough.

I shall not, however, go into a history of dancing, but merely display a few of the eccentricities the world has run into. First, as to opinion; second, as to practice. Now dancing has ever been in use, though held in contempt by some and in esteem by others. All nations, civilised or barbarous, have had recourse to it, either as a recreation or as a religious ceremony. David danced before the ark, and the daughters of Shiloh danced in a solemn yearly festival. The Israelites danced round the golden calf, &c.

The ancients had a *penchant* this way, whether in person or by animals. The moderns have not yet come up to an elephant waltz. The former had, however, their tight-rope dancing. They had also, for a peculiar species of entertainment, people who walked on the brinks of frightful precipices. Suetonius in Galba, cap. 6, Seneca in his 81st Epistle, and Pliny, lib. 8, cap. 2, make mention of Elephants that were taught to walk the rope (query cable?), and this they did both forwards and backwards, as well as up and down. Galba first caused this feat to be exhibited to the Roman people. After this, such we are told was the confidence reposed in the animal’s dexterity, that a person sat upon an elephant’s back while he walked across the theatre on a rope extended from one side to the other!

Lipsius, who has collected these testimonies, thinks they are so strong that they cannot be doubted. Scalliger mentions that elephants have been not only taught to dance upon the earth, but also upon the rope! Busbequius saw an elephant dance a *pas seul* at Constantinople. Elian says he saw one of these animals writing Roman letters with his trunk. In the reign of Tiberius twelve elephants, six male and six female, were clothed like men and women, and performed a country-dance; at length they went to a feast, where they ate and drank as men do, being great mimics.

Socrates, it seems, learnt to dance of Aspasia, when a renowned old gentleman. In favour of dancing let it be also added, the Romans forgot the loss of the republic and of liberty, to the great increase of political tranquility, in seeing Pylades and Bathyllus dance before them in their theatre. Even the severe Cato did not disdain to dance when at the age of sixty! Dancing has other recommendations. Palleprat says that there are a people in South America who have recourse to the dance to show their sorrow! Perhaps from this Mr. O’Keefe borrowed the fable of his farce, the “Modern Antiques, or the Merry Mourners.” Still, as there are always at least two sides to a question, I am bound in fairness to exhibit what is said against this recreation—not that it will or ought to avail. Cicero reproaches a consular with having danced. Tiberius banished the dancers from Rome; and Domitian expelled many of his members of parliament for having danced. In this respect we Englishers are much more civilised. The Italian poet Alfieri, had an insuperable aversion to dancing, which was remarkable for a poet, and in a nation of dancers, too; but he was very splenic. A French critic went farther; he thought that the reformed churches there did wisely to forbid dancing. One Lambert Daneau wrote a book called “Traite des Danses,” of which there was a third edition in 1583. Its author maintains that “The devil never invented a more effectual way than dancing to fill the world with whoredom.” But, to come nearer home, “Hogarth, in his Analysis of Beauty,” asserts, elegant wantonness to be the principle and perfection of dancing! Then as to sectarians, the methodists proscribe dancing; and those school-masters and school-mistresses who admit dancing-masters into their schools, and those parents who employ them for their children, are for that offence excluded from the society. Hear Mr. Styles (on Methodism and Missions, 1809), he thinks that “A man must have studied in the schools of Hume, Voltaire, and Kotzebue, who can plead in behalf of the theatre; that at fashionable ball-rooms and assemblies, seduction is drawn out to a system; that dancing excites the fever of the passions, and raises a delirium too often fatal to innocence and peace.” When Mr. Styles takes up his pen to write against dancing he barbarously thrusts his kine (an instrument well known to Mr. Styles) into the very heart of Terpsichore. The quakers prohibit dancing as well as music. Daucing, they say, is useless, and below the dignity of the christian character; because also it implies assemblies of idle people, which lead to thoughtlessness as to the important duties of life, and more still, because it gives rise to silly vanity, envying, and malevolence. The quakers’ boys and girls must not, therefore, violate their sedateness or starchness by a single skip. A motion beyond the cadence established at the meeting, would be as wicked as wearing *coquelinot* ribbons. But, is the pulse of the young and externally demure accordant with all this? Is the heart of the maiden quaker really as dull as the tabby that she wears? Oh, no!

Still it is a notable fact, that a husband conveys to another gentleman the power to take those liberties with his wife in a dance, if to the tune of “The Devil among the Tailors,” or any other music, that he would be the first to resent if done in a room without any music at all.



The various figures which ingenious dancing masters have, from time to time, conjured up for the amusement of man or woman kind, and their own profit, are many and perhaps undetachable. It was, however, reserved for Sir N. Wrexall, in the nineteenth century to give an account of a dance called the *tarantella*, performed before a *select company*, by the late Lady Hamilton. I may be excused repeating it, "As (to give his own words, vol. i. p. 238, *Memoirs of his Own Time*) the screams, attitudes, starts, and embraces, with which it was intermingled, gave it a *peculiar character*."

But let us dismiss the too gloomy view of a recreation which some people of diseased optics are determined to take—they, we mean, who are resolved that this life should be passed in moping melancholy, in a stupid and lumpish manner. Such people are perfectly consistent with themselves, for in company they are, as it were, haggard, neither enjoying nor imparting pleasure. Everything has its use, and everything is abused—for instance, the impertinence of those who are paid to amuse, as witness Pitrot, the Vestris of his day, calling himself *Le Grand Pitrot*. He was one of those overbearing insolents, who pick pockets and laugh at their dupes. Too well paid, these capers become consequential. At Vienna, upon a certain occasion, he chose to appear only in the last act of the ballet. The then emperor of Austria desired him to come forth at the end of the first—Pitrot refused—the court left the opera, and then Pitrot told the dancers they would have a hop to themselves, which they did. However, this was forgiven, and at his departure he was presented with the emperor's picture set in brilliants. Pitrot received it with *sans froid*, pressed his thumb upon the crystal, crushed the picture to pieces, adding, "Thus I treat men not worthy of my friendship." This fellow behaved equally ill in France, Prussia, and Russia, but at length scouted by all his patrons, and after giving his thousands to opera girls, he wandered about Calais in rags and poverty. The celebrated Farinelli, after accumulating a fortune in England, built a superb mansion in Italy, which he dignified with the significant appellation of "The English Folly."

Every one knows that dancing horses may be seen any night at Batty's (formerly Astley's) amphitheatre. In a grand carousel of Louis the thirteenth, there were dances gracefully executed by horses. The late Phillip Astley taught his horses to do everything but saying their prayers.

## MR. LLOYD JONES AND MR. C. SOUTHWELL.

It is incumbent on me to publicly announce that Mr. Lloyd Jones has refused my invitation to debate the question of socialist policy. My readers will remember, that in a letter of mine which appeared in No. 10 of this periodical, I impugned the entire policy pursued by socialists since 1839—that memorable year, when Exeter's bishop attacked socialism in the House of Lords. I pronounced that policy *false in spirit, puerile in character, and disastrous in results*. Now, how have I been met by Mr. Jones? Has he accepted my invitation, with that eager enthusiasm for free discussion which formerly distinguished him? His own letter in reply to that of mine will best answer these questions:

Rose Hill, May 31st, 1843.

DEAR SIR,—I have read the letter intended for insertion in the "New Moral World," which you were courteous enough to send me; and for your individual information I beg to state, that upon the occasion referred to I spoke of you as I would of any individual, in or out of the society, whose conduct I considered injurious to the interests of the society.

I always make it a rule to speak only what I believe to be true, avoiding, if possible, individual offence, but even that I would risk rather than leave a truth, which I believed to be of public value, unspoken.

I wish you to understand that I never disguised my opinions of your public proceedings, I always disapproved of them, and I was never backward in saying so, either in your presence or your absence.

You seem inclined to hold a public discussion with me upon the policy of the society. Permit me to state, that I have neither the time nor the inclination to enter into such an affair; and if I had, I should not consider myself justified in ministering to that quixotic spirit for contest which has already brought you into so many needless difficulties.

I hope that you will give me credit for sincerity, when I state that I grieve much when I reflect upon the useless manner in which you are wasting your energies; the zeal you possess, if controlled and directed by a sound judgment, might effect much for the good of society.

I remain, yours truly,

LLOYD JONES.

for refusing to discuss "the policy of the society" the public will no doubt properly estimate. To my thinking they are not of the sonndest description. I can very well understand Mr. Jones's want of "inclination" to "enter into such an affair," but I cannot understand at all how want of *inclination* can be deemed a valid excuse by any individual, much less by Mr. Jones, for the non-performance of a great public duty. As to his not having time, it may be so, though I must confess to being rather sceptical upon the point. Where there is a will there is a way, quoth the adage, which, however, like many other adages, is not always true; I do, nevertheless, think that if Mr. Jones had not lacked *will* to defend socialist policy, he would have found *time* for the purpose. Be this as it may, it must be allowed that socialist advocates, declining to defend the practices of their party, on the ground of wanting either time or inclination to do so, is quite a novelty. But Mr. Jones assures me that even if he had both time and inclination he should not consider himself "justified in ministering to that quixotic spirit for contest which has already brought me into so many needless difficulties."

This part of Mr. Jones's letter made me laugh heartily. It is a fine piece of satire upon *conservative* socialism. I was reminded by it of a story told in school-books about a cunning fox who, having unfortunately lost his tail, was very anxious to convince the other foxes that nothing could be more prudent than to get rid of so useless and ugly an appendage. Yes, the idea of this old-fox story was suggested to me by Mr. Jones's amiable reflections upon the quixotic spirit which has already brought me into so many difficulties; for having, as it would seem, lost his own "quixotic spirit for contest," as he calls it, but enthusiastic, energetic, and persevering spirit for contest, as I call it, he has taken some pains to convince me that I should not be brought into so many needless difficulties did I at once get rid of mine. The fox did not fancy tails, when he had lost his own tail. The most talented of socialist advocates don't like the "spirit of contest," now that he has no spirit for contest.

I have no feelings personally hostile to Mr. Jones; on the contrary, there is no public man for whose talents and general character I have a higher regard. I credit him with perfect sincerity, but I do not like his present policy—I do not like his present position; and though I would joyfully give place to him, if he would consent to occupy my position, I would not *exchange* positions with him for untold gold. I look upon Mr. Jones as the champion, and the *victim*, of an aristocratic party of socialists—a party that, like all other aristocratic parties, *has shown itself an enemy to free discussion*. To that party Mr. Jones is unfortunately allied—and to its influence over him I trace his present disposition to avoid a discussion, in which, as the avowed advocate of socialist policy, he was bound in honour to engage. If, then, he grieves for me, I no less grieve for him. If he reflects with bitterness upon the "useless manner" in which I am wasting my energies, I as bitterly reflect upon the mischievous manner in which he is using his; and I tell him distinctly, that if, his present proceedings are to be taken as evidence of zeal controlled and directed by sound judgment, I envy him not either his zeal or his judgment—from a conviction that zeal, unless associated with unbending integrity, is more than contemptible—and that the "sound judgment" which displays itself in the refusal of its possessor to defend that party policy to which stands pledged, is of very questionable utility.

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# THE INDEPENDENT STIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

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TWOPENCE.

## LETTERS ON THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

ADDRESSED

TO LORD ASHLEY.

IV.

MY LORD.—The ministerial scheme for church-of-England-ising factory children has failed—in other terms, the educational clauses of Sir James Graham's "Factories Employment Bill," have been withdrawn. I dare say your lordship was in the House of Commons, when that right honourable baronet, with a face long and woe-begone as his who "drew Priam's curtains in the dead of night," announced his determination to abandon those clauses. If you were not, you certainly lost a great treat. Nothing could be better than the right honourable baronet's face upon that occasion—except, perhaps, the speech of Lord John Russell, who rose to *compliment* the ministers on their "wise discretion" in giving up the obnoxious clauses.

Thus, my lord, has ended this conservative attempt to check dissent, and swell church influence, under cover of orthodoxly religionising our factory population. Dissent has triumphed, as much, however, by the apathy of its foes as by the energy of its friends. Sir James Graham urged as reasons for his "wise discretion," the active opposition of dissenters, and lukewarmness of churchmen.

Now, my lord, I think, that by actively opposing those clauses, the dissenters only did their duty—but certainly the heartless, half-and-half kind of support given to them by churchmen has utterly astonished me. Their indifference as to the fate of a measure, evidently framed with a view to strengthen churchism and weaken dissent, disposes me to exclaim, "Oh foolish churchmen, who hath bewitched ye?" For it is only by supposing them bewitched that I can account for such unusual disregard to their own interests. The "Morning Post," which represents the views of one church section, is furious against the ministry, and seems very anxious to know "What has become of our *strong* government," a kind of information, I need hardly inform your lordship, it would be difficult for any one to give, seeing that "our strong government," like its educational clauses, is consigned to the "ever during dark." But whether ministers be strong or weak, I do, my lord, most certainly marvel at their conduct. They acted foolishly in hampering themselves with such an educational measure as the one lately proposed, but having done so, they should have persevered unto the end, and boldly carried it through. Such another is not likely to be proposed for some time—if at all. The "Morning Chronicle" thinks that neither the present nor any other ministry by which it may be displaced, will risk its ministerial existence, by an attempt to establish a *national* system of education—and your lordship is, of course, aware that Sir James Graham said, in answer to a question put to him upon the subject, that the government had no intention to introduce any other educational measure, in lieu of the one just withdrawn.

Such, my lord, are the consequences of state meddling with religious questions—such the result of state attempts to mix up religious with secular instruction—or rather attempts to prevent the people acquiring secular knowledge—while stuffing their craniums with unintelligible nonsense about this or that religion. I maintain, that it is the state's duty to see that all are liberally provided with sound knowledge, just as much as it is the state's duty to see that all are sufficiently provided with wholesome food. If food is necessary, so, in a secondary sense, is knowledge, and a really good government would take care to provide for the governed an ample supply of both. If to well feed, well clothe, and well lodge the people, is the first duty of their rulers, to give them knowledge is surely the second. Yes, to educate all, is a governmental duty, second only to that of feeding, clothing, and housing them. And, my lord, I must agree with a writer in the Post, that a government which is not equal to the task of carrying its own plan of education, is unfit to be a government. But, my lord, my idea of the sort of national education everywhere needed, is very different from ideas generally entertained upon that important subject. Almost all our educational authorities, are in favour of combining in one system, religious and secular instruction. Now, my lord, I would separate the secular from the religious. The facts of science, and the fancies of theology, have nothing in common with each other. The latter, if taught at all, should be taught by individuals to individuals, as mere matter of individual speculation, with which the state has no right to busy itself. As well said by an American writer, "The state should protect all religious opinions, but dictate none." But to the national teaching, and national reception of secular instruction, there can, I conceive, be no valid objection. It is only when the religious instruction pollutes the secular, that the secular pollutes the understanding. A writer in the "Sentinel," of Saturday May 27, 1843 says that "Education, liberal and enlightened, unfettered by sectarian dogmas, and wholly free from age-worn prejudices—having for its end the sublime morality of the christian gospel, is *the* education needed by the untutored and neglected youthful poor of Great Britain"—but I tell your lordship that no education having for its basis "the sublime morality of the christian gospel," can be liberal and enlightened, unfettered by sectarian dogmas, and wholly free from age-worn prejudices. Sublime morality of the christian gospel forsooth! It is a great pity that the Sentinel does not inform its readers in what part or parts of "holy writ" such morality may be found. Nothing, my lord, is more boasted about in this canting country, than the sublime morality of its religion—and yet no two sects of christians seem to have precisely determined in what that morality consists. The old testament morality, I may remind your lordship, is rather exceptionable. Morality is not a thing of words, but action—just action constituting its very essence—but the just actions recorded in scripture are few and far between—nearly the whole book being filled with details that are totally unfit for indiscriminate perusal. Truly they are the records of a carnal people. If your lordship has the phantom of a doubt upon the subject, I pray you to read once



more the "sacred volume." After extracting all the "sublime morality" possible, from the tale about Adam, his rib, the chattering serpent, &c., proceed with the history of Noah, "who found grace in the eyes of the lord," and we are assured "was a just man, and perfect in his generations." Read, my lord, how, at the age of five hundred years, he begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth—how he made an ark of gopher wood, for purposes too well known to call for special enumeration—how he went into the said ark with "two and two" of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth—how Noah did this, that, and t'other, till God, after the deluge, established a covenant between himself and all flesh that was upon the earth—how Noah got drunk, and "was uncovered in his tent"—how Ham saw Noah's nakedness, and was cursed for his pains—finally, how Noah died at the advanced age of nine hundred and fifty.

Having culled some sublime morality from all this, your lordship can pass on to other chapters, no less edifying and instructive. The story of Abraham is interesting, but that recorded of Lot is more interesting. I have no room to do it justice, as, in truth, justice requires it should be quoted entire; but I cannot do that so must needs content myself with pointing out some of the primary incidents therein related, such as his "baking unleavened bread," in order to give certain angelic visitors a feed; which visitors being pressed upon by "the men of Sodom" he exostulates with this latter parcel of dirty vagabonds in this wise, "Behold, now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes; only unto these men (angels) do nothing: for therefore, came they under the shadow of my roof." Then, my lord, after Lot displayed this notable species of hospitality, and had lost his wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt, because she *would* look behind, after being warned by an angel not to do so, he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters; but what he did while, "rather disguised in liquor," to those daughters, your lordship may find out by consulting Genesis xix., verses 31 to 36: for as to copying them into these columns, being an investigator with a character for decency, that I do not wish to lose, I cannot "find it in my heart to do it."

As, however, it is probable that neither your lordship nor the Sentinel may fancy the old testament, but, like Mr. Shiel, object to it as being "the record of a carnal people," I will not go through that book, page by page, and show there is not a single page from end to end, without "sublime morality," in perfect keeping with that practised by Noah and Lot. No, your lordship, I will neither weary nor disgust you by any more old testament details, but come at once to those contained in the new testament—in that book to which all christians point with triumphant exultation—not as the record of a carnal people, but as a gospel which had "God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without mixture of error for its matter."

Now, my lord, I presume that those who, like the Sentinel, write about the sublime morality of the christian gospel, will have no objection to an analysis of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, for that sermon has been pronounced incomparable by the most eminent divines. They pretend that it contains a perfect system of morals; and not a few infidel writers have borne testimony to its surpassing merit. I conceive, therefore, that nowhere else can we look for so favourable a specimen of "the sublime morality" of the christian gospel. A sermon so extravagantly lauded ought, surely, to be superior to honest criticism.

Now, my lord, I think that the very first lines of that sermon, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," so far from subliming, have a manifest tendency to degrade, and render ridiculous, those who accept them in their obvious sense. Poverty of spirit can never co-exist with those exalted and generous sentiments which lie at the foundation of all human virtues. There are none so vicious, mean, and despicable, as the poor-spirited. There never was, perhaps, a single individual who combined poverty of spirit with richness of virtue. Instead, my lord, of teaching our children that the poor in spirit are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, all available means should be used to inspire them with dislike of poverty, though not of the poor. Poverty is always an evil. No matter what shape it may assume—no matter whether it be poverty of body or poverty of spirit—an evil it always is. The proof that it is

an evil may be found in the fact that all men (except only a few religious enthusiasts, who voluntarily suffer the anguish of poverty here, in the hope of being well rewarded for thus aching hereafter) shun poverty as they would a leprosy or pestilence. Nor do we find that those who are loudest in their praises of the poor-spirited, like themselves to be deemed some of the number. But, perhaps, my lord, it may be urged that Christ did not mean by "poor in spirit" palsy, mean, or cowardly in spirit—but used the word *poor* in the sense of *humble* or *gentle*; to which I reply, it is my custom to take words as I find them, and attach to them their obvious sense. It would be quite easy to defend the worst book that ever was written, if we are allowed to withdraw all the objectionable words and phrases they contain—or, what amounts to the same thing, attach to them any sense but that which they were evidently intended to convey. Not twenty-four hours have elapsed since I held a public discussion with a christian of the explaining-away school, who when the apostolic words, "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth," were quoted to him, said, "Oh, things above don't mean anything above the clouds, or a locality, but only *states of mind*;" whereupon the hearers shouted rather than laughed; and no marvel either, when they witnessed so contemptible an attempt to give a meaning to words no one could ever have intended them to express. This practice of my opponent is by no means peculiar to him, but common to all christian logicians. What they find written they accept as it is written, when their divine cause is served by so honest a course; but they will not accept what is written, as it is written, under any other circumstances. A poor-spirited fellow everyone understands to be a pitiful, sneaking, reptile-like creature; but as Jesus in his renowned sermon pronounced the poor in spirit blessed, and promised them an exclusive heaven, christians have no other *point d'appui* left than the miserable one they snatch from glossing, or rather perverting, the text.

The second sentence, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted;" is no less objectionable than the first. It is objectionable, because calculated to falsely impress those who receive as divine truth certain spurious ideas. It tends to associate in their thoughts the ideas of mournfulness and virtue. Now, to mourn is not reasonable, and therefore cannot be virtuous. It is infinitely better that we should rejoice than mourn. What is past redress is now with me past care, said Macbeth, and though it is oft-times difficult so far to command our passions, as to be utterly reckless of evils suffered and therefore not to be recalled; that man comes nearest to my idea of the "sublimely moral," who is least affected by unavoidable evils, past, present, or to come. I do, therefore, my lord, object to a philosophy which instructs us that mourners are blessed, for they shall be comforted.

It cannot, however, be denied, and far from me, my lord, is any desire to deny it, that there are in this celebrated "Sermon on the Mount" many excellent precepts and wise maxims; such as, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness;" understanding, as I do, by that word righteousness, *righteousness*; for, without doubt, the man who acts righteously, in other words, acts *justly*, who, in figurative phrase, may be said to hunger and thirst after the good, the beautiful, and true, is indeed blessed. Again, the precept "Swear not at all," is very excellent, and most heartily do I wish that christians would so far show themselves attentive to Christ's word, as to act upon it. Oath-taking, my lord, is a nuisance, considered in its least offensive form; and I need scarcely add that the practice of taking oaths upon any and every occasion is altogether demoralising in its tendency. But, my lord, although some few precepts and maxims contained in this much-misunderstood sermon do admit of a useful interpretation, the staple of it is absurd and ludicrous in the extreme; as, for example, the precept, or rather command, "Judge not that ye be not judged;" which indeed has the semblance of wisdom, but then it is only the semblance. My lord, nothing can be more evident than this, that we ought, as it is our *duty*, to judge, and always court rather than shun the judgment of others. Of course we should judge uprightly; and if we do judge thus, I am of opinion that we act wisely; and foolish indeed is the man who dreads the judgment of others. Honest men are usually found rather anxious to meet than avoid the judgment of their fellow-creatures; it being the dishonest, and only the dishonest, who dread an honest judgment.



It is, my lord, I presume, quite unnecessary to enlarge much upon such *impracticable* passages as "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." "And if any man will sue thee at law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away;" with many others, which could not by possibility be practised in any *practicable* state of society. Surely, my lord, you are not so unspenkably stupid as to suppose that in the present state of social, or rather anti-social, existence any individual would be justified in turning his left cheek to the ruffian who may think fit to smite him on the right. And who but a "stark, staring madman" would dream of handing over his cloak to the man who had legally plundered him of his coat; or march two miles with some individual, because such individual may have taken it into his head to compel him to march one. Who, my lord, with wits undiseased, is prepared so far to play the idiot's part as to give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow never to turn away. Such a kind of sublime action might be exceedingly moralising, if relative to some imaginary state of society, but I do assure your lordship that my imagination is unequal to the task of imagining any such societary state, and how you, who are a staunch, "thick and thin" supporter of our "old immoral world," can act upon any such precepts as are here objected, I am at a loss to conceive. The Sentinel, who is an anti-corn law, and complete suffrage supporter, would do the world much service if he could show that when all the mighty reforms of which he is the advocate, are accomplished, the world, or even the British nation, will be in a condition to act upon such sublime christian morality as I have here expatiated upon. I should like to know from him whether the complete suffrage movement will help us to a state of society in which any individual would act morally or sanely if he gave his cloak (supposing him to have a cloak) to any fellow-citizen who found it convenient to rob him of his coat. My lord, I challenge him and you, backed as ye are by all the learning of the christian party, to show that in *any* practicable state of society such an action would be moral. Nothing my lord, is moral that is unjust; just action being, as already observed, the essence of morality. Now, we may be, and indeed not seldom are, unjust towards ourselves as well as others, and grossly unjust towards ourselves should we be, if, when injured, instead of resisting the injurer, or at all events, taking steps to prevent, we stupidly invited a repetition of the injury. Yet, my lord, such would be the conduct of christians were they silly enough to act up to their own professions. Bayle said a nation of *real* christians could not subsist. My lord, he said truly. A nation of *real* christians *might* exist, but it could not subsist. If formed at sunrise, it would infallibly fall to pieces before sunset. The morality taught by Christ, if it be morality, is altogether futile, for the reasons here advanced. Those reasons are sound or unsound; if the latter, my contemporary the Sentinel will much favour by demonstrating their fallaciousness; if sound, how grossly absurd it is to prate about founding a national, or *any*, system of education upon the sublime morality of the christian religion. For your lordship to talk in such a strain, is neither so strange nor so unbecoming as it appears in the Sentinel; for your lordship is a tory in politics; and of course knows that the christian religion's sublime morality harmonises very sweetly with tory principles; whereas the Sentinel is a radical reformer, not a "whole hog" chartist, to be sure, but a complete suffragist, who quarrels with, and of course labours to upset, all our political institutions. Neither the church nor the state gives him the least satisfaction, and week after week his pen furnishes a flood of denunciation that rolls like a torrent over the devoted heads of the few who monopolise the right of making those laws, the many are constrained to obey. No doubt his—

Drops of ink  
Make thousands think,

and most heartily do I wish him success—but my lord, I am compelled to deem him weak in intellect, or dishonest in purpose—for if not the former, he must know that the "sublime morality" upon which he would base all educational systems, is altogether hostile to political improvement, nay, some of the apostles taught that to throw off a political yoke, however burthensome, or to resist 'tyranny, however

odious, is a crime against God. The Sentinel cannot deny that apostolic morality is christian morality—and, therefore, if I prove by reference to the new testament itself, that some of the most influential apostles distinctly taught, that he who resists human ordinances, resists the ordinances of God, the Sentinel, if he would "reconcile himself to himself," is bound to reconcile his duty as a christian, with his duty as a *soi disant* hater of tyranny—in other words, show by clear reasoning, that he can be a reformer to any extent, without violating the plainest injunctions of that very gospel he professes to venerate. In Romans chapter xiii., I find written, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God—the powers that be are ordained of God." "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God—and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou, then, not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same." "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." So much, my lord, for the sublime political morality of the christian gospel, at least, that portion of it ascribed to Paul "the chiefest apostle;" an authority I do not suppose that either your lordship or the Sentinel will dare to rebel against. But though his authority is quite conclusive, and ample to "shut up the mouths" of all christian patriots, I will nevertheless quote St. Peter, because, in the first place, we are taught that he had spoken with Jesus face to face, and therefore may fairly be credited with a pretty accurate, as well as extensive knowledge, of his "divine master's" morality; and because, in the second place, the authority of two distinguished saints is sure to weigh more heavily with those who esteem their authority of any value, than that of one, even though the one be St. Paul himself. Well then, my lord, what has St. Peter declared respecting the right of resisting tyranny, or those who usurp and abuse the functions of government; a right, the Sentinel as a radical reformer, is of course a stickler for. My answer may be found in "The first Epistle General" our divines tell us that St. Peter wrote; which among other notable words, contains these: "Submit yourselves to *every* ordinance of man for the lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme: or unto governors, and unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

Such, my lord, is the sort of political morality taught by two acknowledged saints of the christian church—and it does certainly appear to me, that such democratic writers as the Sentinel, would be puzzled to defend it. What! are our children to be taught that to resist tyrants is to resist the ordinances of God, and to inherit unto themselves damnation? Taught it as divine truth, too—truth whereon all sound systems of education must be based. If such teaching is divine, if it is sublimely moral teaching, then we do wrong in esteeming the characters of Hampden, Sidney, Emmett, and Washington, for *they* flatly refused to submit themselves to every ordinance of man, for the lord's sake—on the contrary, "they resisted the power"—and, if Saint Paul may be believed, will expiate in hell their unhalloved sin of rebellion. Yes, my lord, if christianity is not a tissue of fables and ridiculous conceits, Washington was a rebel, Bolivar was a rebel, Tell was a rebel, all were rebels who resisted any state authority whatever—aye, rebels no less against divine, than human, government. My lord, christians may write and talk as they please about such doctrine they may call it divine, sublimely moral, and so forth—but I have no hesitation in pronouncing it immoral as it is false, admirably calculated, however, it must be confessed, to make those who receive it as true, contented slaves of tyranny in this world, from dread of a worse tyranny "in that which is to come."

I am, with all due respect,

Your lordship's well wisher,

C. SOUTHWELL.



## BLASPHEMY LAWS—ENGLISH AND SCOTCH.

THE recent show of persecution in Scotland gives an interest to a subject which I have before thought of investigating—the state of the law with regard to blasphemy in that country. Mr. Alexander has very lately published a work called the Scots' Acts. In his title page he speaks of it as "An abridgement of the acts of parliaments of Scotland, from the reign of James the first, in 1424, to the union with England in 1707, including, verbatim, all the acts *now in force and use*." In his introduction, he says his work "Contains the whole acts passed by the parliament of Scotland which remain in force and use, *in whole or in part* at the present period." I find p. 241 an "act against the crime of blasphemy," passed A. D. 1661, in the reign of Charles II., enacts, "That whosoever hereafter, *not being distracted in his wits*, shall rail upon, or curse God, or any of the persons of the blessed trinity, shall be processed before the chief justice; and being found guilty, shall be punished with death. Like as his majesty foresaid, tindes, statutes, and ordains, that whosoever hereafter shall deny God, or any of the persons of the blessed trinity, and obstinately continue therein, shall be processed, and being found guilty, that they be punished with death." In a note he says, "In reference to this act, see Hume, vol. I. p. 569, et seq. The punishment of blasphemy is modified by 6th Geo. IV. ch. 47, and 7th Will. IV. ch. 5."

William III. A. D. 1695, confirmed the statute of Charles II., "And farther, his majesty with advice and consent foresaid statutes and ordains, that whoever hereafter shall in their writing or discourse, deny, impugn, or quarrel, argue, or reason, against the Being of God, or any of the persons of the blessed trinity, or the authority of the holy scriptures of the old and new testaments, or the providence of God in the government of the world, shall for the first fault be punished with imprisonment," &c. It goes on to recite the various punishments for the first and second offence, "And for the third fault he shall be punished with death, as an obstinate blasphemous."

On referring to the statutes at large of the United Kingdom, mentioned by Alexander, I find 6th Geo. IV. ch. 47, "Act for restricting the punishment of leasing-making, sedition, and blasphemy in Scotland" (22nd June 1825). It is there enacted, that "Any person convicted of the aforesaid crimes, shall be liable to be punished only by fine or imprisonment, or both, at the discretion of the court before which such person shall be tried. For the second offence, fine and imprisonment, or to be banished for a term of years. Persons banished not departing within thirty days, were to be conveyed by his majesty out of his dominions, and not departing within forty days, were to be transported to such place as should be appointed by his majesty for any term not exceeding fourteen years. The 7th William IV. and 1st Vic. ch. 5, "An act for amending an act of his late majesty, for restricting the punishment of leasing, making, sedition, and blasphemy in Scotland" (18th March, 1837), after setting out with the intention to assimilate the law of Scotland to that of England, and reciting 6th Geo. IV. ch. 47, proceeds to say, so much of the above act as punishes leasing, making, &c., by banishment is repealed. It appears from this act, that there was an act passed in England, the 60th Geo. III. ch. 8, similar to the one given to Scotland in 1825, which gave the alternative to the court of banishment for the second offence. This was not repealed till Geo. IV. and 1st William IV. ch. 73, 1830, and in 1837, the law in Scotland was made the same as in England as far as regards punishment. The act of 1830 repealing that part of the act of George III. having the alternative of banishment, leaves the rest of the punishment for a second offence in force, namely, "Such as may now by law be inflicted in cases of high misdemeanor." Misdemeanor, according to Burn's justice, is only punishable by fine and imprisonment. I conceive, Mr. Editor, that having been convicted on a previous occasion in England, if you were brought up for blasphemy in Scotland it would make a second offence, but though they could punish you more in degree, they could not in kind. As far as relates to the punishment, therefore, fine or imprisonment, or both, is the only part which continues in force of all the statutes particularised. The nature of the offence termed blasphemy will,

however, according to statute law, be determined by those words and description given in the previous statutes of Charles II. and William III.

In England, our statute, as it stands at present, thus defines the crime of blasphemy, "By writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, asserting or maintaining there are more Gods than one, or denying the christian religion to be true, or the holy scriptures of the old and new testament to be of divine authority." The first Scotch act under Charles II. begins curiously enough, by excepting those who are distracted in their wits. Now it is sufficiently singular that judge Hale, from whom the part-and-parcel-fallacy emanated, as a judicial dictum, that christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land, established the case upon a person brought from Bedlam for the purpose. There may have been some doubt about the man's capability of taking care of himself in common matters, but we cannot find fault with him for railing upon and cursing God's providence, who first sent him to a lunatic asylum, and then to a Hale. There was very little difference between the two, a madhouse and the individual who gave such a common law decision as the above, and made himself equally famous in pronouncing judgment upon witchcraft. Posterity certainly cannot doubt which gave the most evident signs of insanity, the Bedlam of those days, the patient out of it, or the judge upon the bench. A very precious trinity! If we had heard more of what the lunatic said, it might have enlightened our minds, as it is, all the commentators upon the law, and all who have touched the subject, have been puzzled to explain the meaning of the words of this second Solomon. I rather think, however, that this Scotch act was passed before Hale was made a judge, and therefore this proviso was in the nature of a prophecy. There were fools they foresaw who would convict those raving-mad of the offence, and, therefore, in a written law, they were able to prevent the exhibition of two fools instead of one. Our Solon being left to judge-made law, immediately fulfilled the law and the prophets, by sentencing one who had been found distracted in his wits. "Railing upon or cursing God," you will remember, is taken from the Jewish law, which sentenced such offenders to be stoned, and gives a case. I suppose it was for the sake of scripture they included it in a separate paragraph, though by putting in the three persons, and the holy trinity, they would have become liable by the Jewish law to be stoned themselves. However, wishing to show that their zeal went farther than God's zeal in his own defence, they improved upon his inspired word, and made "his majesty foresaid," the pious Charles, prescribe death for any one who denied God, or any of the persons of the blessed trinity, and obstinately continued therein. It seems the process of civilization always to want more words to define an offence. However clear a crime might be to our ancestors, under whatever form it assumed, it was not so to those after them, and is not so to us, therefore William III. "Farther ordained that whoever hereafter shall in their writing or discourse, deny, impugn, or quarrel, argue, or reason, against the being of God, or any of the persons of the blessed trinity, or the authority of the holy scriptures of the old and new testament, or the providence of God in the government of the world, shall be punished," &c. This is a net pretty capacious and closely joined together, to catch all culprits in its meshes. Reason would be quite enough and all the rest might follow as *et ceteras*. But here we have, instead of "maintain and assert" heterodoxy, or "deny" orthodoxy, in the English act, "impugn," "quarrel," "argue," "reason" in the Scotch. Were they afraid, from past experience, that a Scot would fight against a dogma, whilst Englishmen would maintain, assert, deny, and shift about with their interest? Did they think the Scotchman a more reasoning creature, and the Englishman a mere yea and nay animal? I deem it, however, a compliment to the Scotch, that at that time they were obliged to introduce a clause against the atheists, those who reason against the being of a God. They soon produced one worthy of their country, David Hume. Our law reads curiously in contrast, any person who shall assert or maintain there are more Gods than one." Was this levelled at socinians and unitarians, as maintaining that God the father, who remained in heaven, and God the son, who walked on earth, in the person of Jesus, were Gods? Or were we at the time a nation of polytheists? Mammon must have been much more in vogue. For the rest the objects of offence are much more comprehensive in the Scotch acts. In the latter we have, in addition, the persons of the



blessed trinity, and the providence of God in the government of the world.

Till 1813, the law of William III. was in full force, therefore they might under it have sentenced a man to death. That up to such a time such a punishment could be inflicted by a people pretending to civilisation, is almost incredible. But the mitigation of the severity of our penal code only just began to be felt, and hanging for sheep-stealing in England, and death for intruding into the flock of salvation in Scotland were about the same time changed for the lesser penalty of transportation. Few, I think, would suppose that they had been liable in England to banishment and transportation for blasphemy up to 1830, and that they were subject to such punishment in Scotland up to 1837. Fourteen years' transportation for continuing of the same opinion! It was under the Castlereagh regime, that such a law was enacted in England, and it was not till the note of preparation sounded for reform in 1830 that it was repealed. The passing of the Reform act may have had, so far, a good effect in long tory-ridden Scotland—according to the Duke of Wellington, the then best represented and constituted country in the world—that in 1837 they thought of being freed from the gagging acts of England.

The same William III. who re-enacted with additional clauses the severe laws of Charles II. passed the present English statute against blasphemy. He acted upon no principle but that of suiting the intolerance and bigotry of the people he came to govern, though averse to the extent to which they carried their religious passions. The Scotch, therefore, he treated with blood, though he introduced some little checks in hunting down their victims. The English statute now thought so severe, that the judges prefer the license which the common law allows to their mercy in trying prisoners, is very mild in comparison with the Scotch. Our more pious neighbours with whom we were linked, preferred their God to all human considerations, and even their self-interest, and therefore followed the divine authority of the bible, which decrees death for the sin of blasphemy. We were not so righteous, after the violent nausea which following examples from the bible and puritanical proceedings had created in the conscience of the nation. We had undergone a violent reaction, and had indulged in the immoralities of the Merry Monarch, who, as Jesus after John, came eating and drinking with his disciples after the fasting and prayer, long faces, and sticking to the scripture of Cromwell and his followers. After the revolution of 1688, it was a mere mercantile spirit in our church to defend her possessions, which had been perilled by popery, and were more open to the invasion of infidelity. All our penal laws looked to property, all our religious interference related to disabilities, that there might be nothing left for enemies, and a greater share for church. We therefore find that a person convicted of blasphemy under the statute of William, "The first offence shall be adjudged incapable and disabled in law, to all intents and purposes whatsoever, to have or enjoy any office or offices, employment or employments, ecclesiastical, civil, or military, or any part in them, or *any profit or advantage* appertaining to them or any of them: and if any person or persons so convicted as aforesaid shall, at the time of his or their conviction, enjoy or possess any office, place, or employment, such office, place, or employment shall be void, and is hereby declared void. And if such person or persons shall be a second time lawfully convicted as aforesaid of all or any of the aforesaid crime or crimes, that then he or they shall from henceforth be disabled to sue, prosecute, plead, or use any action or information, in any court of law or equity, or to be guardian of any child, or executor, or administrator of any person, or capable of any legacy or deed of gift, or to bear any office, civil or military, or benefice ecclesiastical, for ever, within this realm, and shall also suffer imprisonment for the space of three years, without bail or mainprize, from the time of such conviction." Such were the effects of the glorious revolution of 1688. The dissenters were also content to forego their rights to preclude the papists having theirs, and the government was a complete theocracy of the established church, as may be seen from the above act. Freedom from persecution, religious liberty and toleration, scarcely advanced a step till the repeal of the test and corporation acts and catholic emancipation, and all outside the pale lost their liberties, from the apprehension of popery, that bugbear which has so long proved of service, and is yet a protection to every church-and-state tyranny. The preamble of this

statute states, "Whereas many persons have, of late years, *openly avowed and published* many blasphemous and impious opinions, contrary to the doctrines and principles of the christian religion, greatly tending to the dishonour of almighty God, and may prove destructive to the peace and welfare of this kingdom; wherefore for the more effectual suppressing of the said detestable crimes be it enacted." &c.

I should think from the above, that infidelity, at this period, had made great progress in the nation. The lawyer in the reign of Henry VIII. who, from his place in parliament, declared in favor of deism, and the probable atheists in the commonwealth, who despised all religions, and were republicans in politics, assisted by the philosophers, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, must have all sowed seeds which promised a plentiful harvest, had not the church revolution of 1688 nipped it in the bud, and left us still in this unrepealed statute a monument of the past and present power of the establishment.

W. J. B.

## THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH.

BY AN INVESTIGATOR.

THE fifty-third chapter of Isaiah has always been the favourite battle-field of the christians. They think they there fight the infidel on vantage ground. It is the lesson for the day on Good Friday, the time as they suppose, according to scriptural phraseology, of being "lifted up," of triumph to themselves and confusion to their enemies. Bishop Lowth on Isaiah sounds the note of preparation, and tells you beforehand this chapter of chapters is coming. On the issue of this single combat they would appear to be ready to stake the credibility of all the prophecies. They anathematise all who may doubt their interpretation of it in favour of Jesus, though Dr. Arnold did reject it, with all the rest of the prophecies. Another commentator, Dean Allix, says, "It is certain that ancient and modern Jews interpret it of the messiah," meaning his readers to suppose Jesus, when messiah, signifies deliverer, and will apply to all the heroes in Jewish history. Though the above is a lie of the reverend divine, as many of the Jews interpret it as speaking of their nation—to this view Dr. Arnold seems to incline, and in which most sceptics coincide.

I think the inappropriateness of this chapter to Jesus has never been completely shown, and its more correct application never been pointed out in writing. Upon my asking a Jew how his people explained the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, he said many of them referred it to the condition of their nation, but some did to Moses, and he pointed out the resemblance it had to that person. This interpretation has one advantage, if the text were taken literally, in being confined, according to the words, to an individual. The tenses of the verbs are often changed—the past, the present, and the future alternate in different passages—the truth being that it is difficult to know what is the right translation of the original, so that the odds there are even for all parties. Both the Jewish interpretations make it more agreeable to sense that a man speaks of the past, even if through that medium he endeavours to foresee the general course of events for the future.

By prophets were meant formerly poets, in a fine frenzy rolling, and orators addressing a mob with inflammatory language. Prophet, from *pro*, before, and *phemi*, speak, was intended to mean a person *speaking before* the people, as much as before events public and private and for all time, the only christian interpretation for prophecy. This history, more than a prophecy of Jesus, as Bishop Sherlock calls it, the christians have cut down to as short dimensions as possible, in order to avoid difficulties, when the more natural beginning of the chapter would have been from the three last verses of the preceding chapter, "Behold my servant shall deal (or prosper) prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." Now we need not go into particulars—everybody knows that the whole career of Jesus from beginning to end was never prosperous, or prudent, exalted, extolled, or very high, but as directly the reverse as, in human circumstances, can be imagined. Take it in a divine sense, and read, for behold my servant, behold the man, "ecce homo"—for exalted and extolled, and being very high, read lifted up on the gallows, and I will allow the prophecy to pass as very closely fulfilled. St. John makes Jesus show great anxiety



to point out this prediction in his favour, and I must allow that he dealt prudently and the business prospered in his hands which brought him to such a termination. On the contrary, all the world, however they may dispute about the character of Moses, acknowledge him to have been one of the most remarkable and successful personages or heroes in history—one who rose from nothing to greatness, and kept it, a parallel with whom Mahomet, Cromwell, Napoleon will scarcely bear, as having fallen short in particulars which Moses is represented to have accomplished.

"As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the son of men." Now we have no historical records that can be relied upon as to the personal appearance of either Moses or Jesus—all that we can collect is from tradition, and general consent, with some inferences from passages in their lives. Now, that Jesus was young, we know, and the delight of the young women, and he has even been represented as the handsomest of men. Now Moses was eighty years old, when he presented himself as leader to the Jews, he must have been rather bronzed, attending his father-in-law's sheep. We generally hear of his appearance producing terror and repugnance, and this has been so engrained in the minds of men, that he is generally represented as a wrathful, terrible old man—and Michael Angelo, in his famous statue of him at Rome, has given him a pair of horns, to make him as near the Devil as he can. The christians, however, refer the whole of the chapter to Jesus on the cross—they make God in his prophet think directly he has introduced his servant to the world of hurrying him off to execution. Jesus thought of nothing else—lifting up, trees, serpents, killed, sponges, nails, vinegar, that all might be fulfilled that ever related to an execution, or a butcher's business—and the christians, in worship, in type, reality, or vision, in whole, and in part, Christ on the cross, a bit of bread, or relics, never have anything else in their heads.

Even taken metaphorically, the prospect of affairs did not promise such an issue, as to make the propositions of Moses to the Jews very inviting in their aspect, "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." We need scarcely ask here again, as far as common sense is concerned, in what does this apply to Jesus? What had he to do with nations or kings, when there were very few of them under the Roman empire, and when history is totally silent of his pretensions. This makes out the prophecy, however, in a christian sense—the world were called upon to believe what had never happened, and what was contrary to all their senses—they were dumb-founded through faith, and as great confusion ensued among them as among the builders of Babel. Now, according to the bible, whence Isaiah or some one copied, Moses did sprinkle many nations, and not only Pharaoh and the Egyptians, but many in the wilderness, shut their mouths at him. Moses certainly, according to the account of his signs and wonders, made friends and foes see what had not been told them, and consider what they had never heard of before.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the lord revealed?" Now Jesus was tolerably successful in his ministry, as far as he went—he never told the Jews what he was, or what he was going to do with himself or them—his report was certainly very meagre, contradictory, and unfulfilled, yet we are told they at first believed on him—they had faith in nothing, which of course must be the very highest degree of belief, from its incomprehensibility. The arm of the lord, to use his own language, waxed rather short, and ever has, if Jesus was a revelation of it. It came to nothing, and has never been seen since. Still, prophetically speaking in christian mysticism, it is astonishing that such a humbug story, that had not a trace of truth and reason about it, should have been so universally believed, and there was good cause to ask who would believe it. And if the arm of God means the arm of man, never in the cause of any religion, revelation, or superstition has more blood been shed. It was a very likely matter with Moses, that they would not believe the report he had to make to his countrymen—he tells God so to his face, uses almost the same words as the text of the prophet, has a long conversation with God about it, who at last gets in a rage, Moses suggesting difficulties, and supposing the people were not to be made fools of as they always had been by divine revelations. It happened with him as he had said, the

whole history of Moses, with Jews and strangers, is one of confidence lost and confidence restored.

"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." According to most of the evangelists, Jesus was brought up just like other young men, until he had arrived at the age of thirty, when he had form, comeliness, and beauty to make him desirable. But this is a capital prophecy for the christians, because it turns upon the gallows, the tree, as it is called in the scriptures. Here we have him foretold as a tender plant—tender plant, indeed, a man nailed to a cross—and a root out of a dry ground entwining a tree stuck in a rock. Certainly there was nothing here to make him desirable, nevertheless, under that form, everlastingly hanging and never cut down, he is most acceptable to his followers. Now Moses's early life ran many risks—in a cradle on the Nile, nursed and brought up by the charity of strangers, he had nothing to recommend him to his countrymen, though in their behalf he had committed murder—they on that very account repudiated him, he was obliged to flee the country in consequence, and his life was sought after by Pharaoh. When he presented himself again, though the memory of the murder might have passed away, he could not, as we have said before, been an Adonis, age, circumstances, and residences in a foreign climate considered.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and he hid our faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not." Moses was subject to this at the commencement, and at times throughout his career to witness, left a foundling on the waters, and denied the sympathies of his countrymen when he grew up—a murderer, an exile, and continually rejected, despised and disesteemed by the people, whom only the greatest cunning on his part, and the greatest ignorance on their parts, accompanied with the greatest severity, could keep in subjection to him. That the verses of this sort point to the earlier periods of his life is evident, from the fact of succeeding verses constantly applying to the ultimate success which crowned his endeavours. This was precisely the reverse with Jesus, to whom it happened at the end of his days. Instead of being despised and rejected before he was brought up to trial and execution, his language and actions showed the greatest disrespect and contempt of all other people. Not only was he followed by multitudes, but he was entertained by pharisees, as a lion, and his manners until the last partook of the joyous and reckless festivity which marked his entrance into life and his ministry—angels singing, magi making presents, and an invitation to a wedding party, where he first exercised his supernatural powers, like a Comus, by turning the very water into wine, when they were already well drunk. As to his being a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he says the contrary of it himself, he acknowledges he had the reputation of being a winebibber and a glutton, a character the most infamous in the East. He says he came eating and drinking, as a contrast to John the Baptist, who came fasting and praying, and exhorts his disciples to joyousness, as seeing in him a bridegroom. However, this again relates to the gallows, as the christians will have it, it paints a man under these unpleasant circumstances, and inasmuch as represented it was a reason to disown him, so it became with them the better exercise of their faith, and the great doctrine of their belief.

"Surely he hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet did we esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." This circumstance often occurred to Moses—the Israelites thought God hated him and them, and was punishing both, whenever they got into difficulties. Yet, as they say, he was one of them, and shared their distresses as well as bore the whole responsibility of them, and God is represented as punishing him as well as them for their sins. This verse also has the benefit of having the verb in the past tense, and speaks of events fulfilled. Now what responsibility did Jesus take upon himself? When, contrary to the expectations he held out to his disciples, and their persuasions, which he did not disabuse, he fell a sacrifice on the scaffold, it was very well to say, or have said for him, it was not for any temporal purposes I came into this world, but for the immediate end of the world, and my return in glory—which has never arrived up to this time—and to sign your passports to heaven, and lead you into the promised land of nothing, that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller has yet



returned." But for this very reason, because the christians esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, they believed on him and God.

"But he was wounded (or tormented, the proper reading) for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Past tense again—and, as I said before, this must apply to Moses, as, taking in consideration the oriental style, which is never to be taken literally, and the latitude given in the translation, it all happened to him. Moses always represents himself as bearing God's anger, averting his wrath—even suffering punishment for them, as we shall presently see, is especially mentioned in a succeeding verse. Though with these vicissitudes his final triumph is recorded, which, as I said before, shows the verses in these places applicable to Moses, but directly contrary to the case of Jesus. In the thirty-second of Deuteronomy the reader will find, according to the five last verses, "And the lord spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying, Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession. And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people. Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee, but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel." Now this refers to the fourteenth of Numbers, where circumstances happen to Moses exactly suitable to the expressions used by Isaiah. They refuse to march against the enemy, murmur as usual against Moses, and God says it was already the tenth time they had tempted and refused to hearken to his voice, which, as it happened as many times afterwards, was a pretty trial for Moses. They even went so far as to say they would have another captain to lead them back to Egypt. Moses, as he usually paints himself and is described by the prophet, does not say a word, but falls on his face before all the assembly of the congregation of Israel. Only Joshua and Caleb dare speak, and the people were going to stone them, had not Moses got up his gallant show, "the glory of the lord appearing before all the children." God was going, as Moses says, to kill them all, and make out of him a mightier and a greater nation than they, had he not waived this reproof from the consequences of their guilt—had he not renounced this blessing and interceded with God for them in the most provoking language, who at last yielded and said I have pardoned according to thy word. But what did Moses get? Why that he should die in the wilderness with all the rest of the people who had murmured, and never possess the holy land. The people then who had rejected him, and made him to be tormented for their transgressions, bruised for their iniquities (and certainly he did rough it, what between God and the people), put the chastisement of their peace upon him, and got healed with his stripes, began to mourn, and would go out against the enemy without him, and met with a defeat. All this reads in accordance with driving a beast to market, scenes in butchers' shops, and the fate of a convicted felon, which pleases the christians, as they will see nothing else. The people having twice, as above, renounced the leadership of Moses, it may be well said of him by the prophet, under such circumstances—"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." As we have had to say, before, on occasion of similar words, taken in correspondence with the context, that applied to Jesus, they will do for the clouds, but not for earth, as we neither know that he bore our iniquities, only his own we thought, nor has he given us proof of it and what ought to have followed his re-appearance in glory. Sometimes he was the shepherd, but more often the sheep himself—however this suits, the omnivorous nature of christian prophecy, that hits so many birds with one stone.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Now this is remarkable that Moses could not speak, he told God so in the beginning, in order to be excused his mission to the Israelites, and God consequently gave him Aaron for a mouth-piece. We have seen this in the chapter

of Numbers, that he said not a word to the people, but betook himself to a roll on the ground, and his accustomed signs and wonders, which were ready at hand on those occasions. When even God changed a blessing into a curse, and punished him for the offences of others, he said not a word, but patiently submitted, and he gives his own character, "Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." Jesus, on the contrary, had plenty of talk, such as it was—he was his own spokesman, the gift of miracles he might give to his disciples, but the gift of the gab he kept to himself as long as he lived. Though he was rather what is called dumb-founded and at his wits' end when he was taken up and condemned, still he spoke more or less, according to the different gospels, and in John somewhat at length. He opened his mouth therefore wide enough and often enough, and he never behaved like a lamb or a sheep till the last; on the contrary, Jews and gentiles bore very patiently with him. However, spite of his resistance to the shearers (the Jews and gentiles, who made him amenable to justice), and his belonging to the father, who was the butcher who led him to slaughter, the christians only look upon him as the fulfilment of prophecy in his death, like a felon cut down and given to dissection, which suits the still nature drawn by Isaiah.

"He was taken from prison and from judgement (is also read, he was taken away by distress and judgement) and (or, but) who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken." Here Louth, in Mant's edition of the bible, allows imprisonment was not a part of Christ's sufferings, and as to his generation not being known, we have the declaration of his birth, death, and burial and a long genealogy. Now, almost word for word, literally taken, this verse is applicable to Moses, and the first sentence in a double sense, for God took Moses from Midian, where he had been confined on account of murder, and sent him on his mission to Egypt. He was also taken away when he died, from prison and from judgment, as he was sentenced to remain in the wilderness until his death. As to his generation, nobody knew his father or mother, he was a foundling as everybody knows, and nobody knew his death and burial, as is expressly mentioned, for God sent him up to a mount to die, buried him himself, and, as verse the sixth says, "but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." That he was cut off out of the land of the living—we have already seen, he was not permitted to go into the land of the living, but was to remain with the dead in the wilderness—and the reason that he was stricken was, as I have before shown, for the transgression of the people. Being cut off out of the land of the living, unless it applied to Moses's case, has no meaning at all, as it happens not only to Jesus but to everybody. For the transgression of a people, and not his own, Moses was thus circumstanced—but what people acknowledged, when did the Jews submit to Jesus as the servant of God, and the medium between them and him? But for the transgression of my people, say the christians, Jesus was crucified, "Being one of the Jews offending against his country's laws, and those of the Romans," the same way as the executions in England, and elsewhere are put to the account of the crimes of the nations. In this sense he suffered capital punishment, and if all the rest be hocus pocus, and Jesus never existed as a man, why this is what a variety of heretical christians and infidels have always said, "Who shall declare his generation?" If God took him away by distress and judgment, or from prison, the sooner he put an end to bullying his own son, and made an end of his torments, the better.

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." This verse is very unfortunate for Jesus, as having an appearance of agreeing with his case, and deceiving simple christians. The blockheads who composed his history, have made the circumstances of his death and burial exactly the reverse of what is stated by the prophet. We all know that Jesus in his death was between two thieves, and was put in the grave of a rich man. Though such is the confusion of brains amongst christians, that I have often heard them quote this as literal prophecy in favour of Jesus, and when explained to them, still support its application to Jesus—yet the commentators know full well the contradiction given to their assertions by these words, and therefore Lowth endeavours, as Mant says, to



"render it" entirely different, that is to translate the passage without any authority, exactly to suit the real circumstances of the case. Jesus too, was very violent, in the temple, and in defence of himself—very unlike a lamb, except in bleating nonsense—or as a sheep going to slaughter. As to his not being a deceiver, he not only deceived the people of his own time, but all christians up to 1843, who have in vain looked for his coming, and the fulfilment of his promises. With those full of faith, however, this is the best prophecy of all, as it is a contradiction of facts and character. Now Moses had his grave with the wicked, that was his express punishment, when his own was to be with all the other carcases of those who had become "wicked," by refusing to march, but he was with the rich in his death, as he departed this life on the eve of their taking possession of the land and becoming rich. His punishment was not greater, because he had not violently opposed God, as Moses represented those to have done whom he consumed by fire and sword, and as far as the promised land went so far so good, they got it, and he was lucky enough, by whatsoever means, generally to accomplish what he proposed.

"Yet it pleased the lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the lord shall prosper in his hand." Yet Moses had to encounter a great many difficulties, which defeated, in his life-time, one of the principal objects he had in view—the conquest of Canaan. When this happened he had several wives and children, mentioned by name, therefore, as he lived so long, we may suppose he saw his own seed in children, grand, and great-grand children, and not only that, if we did not take it literally, he saw the Israelites, according to his own account, wonderfully increased in numbers, who might be called, metaphorically, his seed. But the next sentence of the prophet was a literal fact, according to the past history and the seventh verse of the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, "And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." If this was not prolonging his days, I should like to know what that means, and the only narration of events is to show that the pleasure of the lord did prosper in his hand. It certainly did not in the hands of Jesus, for even if his will were executed, it was when this new Moses had met with an ignominious death, which belied all his former assertions and the belief of the people. Besides, this mystical interpretation met with its fulfillment when Jesus was little more than thirty, no great prolongation of his days. As to his seed, we never heard that he had any children, no followers that he could see, for they had all fled at the denouement of the catastrophe. If God perched him up on a cross, and that on the top of a mount, Mount Calvary, to see two or three believers standing afar off, all I can say is that it was a very sorry imitation of Moses on the mount, looking on the promised land, after having brought his thousands to take possession of it. All this happened to Moses, therefore did not to Jesus, when his soul was made an offering for sin, but bruises and griefs crowned the whole, like the thorns, scourging, nails, and spear, when they should have been, as in the case of Moses, the natural impediments to all efforts of successful perseverance. Yet, if the pleasure of the lord prospering in his hands was the misery of his son here, and being *non inventus*, or no where, for ever after, we must allow the christians the fulfillment of prophecy.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." I must here observe, and for the preceding verse, that soul means life, not a name for nothing. Now it did not look like being satisfied with the labour of a life, when Jesus prayed his father that this cup might pass from him, tried all human means of escape, and finally exclaiming, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" gave up the ghost in despair. When he was obliged to consign his mother, whom he had ill-treated all his life, to the charity of a disciple, and leave his Magdalen no other resource but to return to her former occupation, or to the exercise of pious imposture. It was, altogether, a pretty a confession of faults as ever sinner made. As to his being a servant, he never called himself so, but the son of God and the equal of his father, the usurper of his throne, pardoning sins here, and judging the world hereafter, when he and his twelve disciples should have hurled the father and his angels from the judgment seat, and taken their places.

As to his knowledge justifying many, where were his disciples when they saw the turn things had taken, and how far the result had justified his promises? It is not meant to be said of him that he bore their iniquities, until he had brought the fulfillment of his projects to a successful termination, and did he? Believing christians may point to heaven, and say, he bears our iniquities there—but our affair is with earth, to there we confine ourselves, and do not play fast and loose between land and sky, reality and fiction. With the cross ever in view, christians may claim the prophecy, and say, that aiming at that through his life, he was content when he had gained that pre-eminence, and has ever since been the justification not of innocent men put to death, but of every rascal whose iniquities, equal to those of Jesus, had brought him to an untimely end on the scaffold. But all the above did happen to Moses, as far as the description is copied from a written history. He blessed the twelve tribes of Israel before his death. "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab, unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho: and the lord showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan; and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manassah, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea. And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees unto Zoar. And the lord said unto him, this is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the lord died there in the land of Moab, over against Beth Peor." He certainly bore their iniquities, for it was their fault and not his that they did not go into Canaan—he took the proper measures to do so—he did not join them in their refusal—or enter into rebellion with them against himself—the lord did not blame him, but was going especially to favour him on the occasion, had he not taken their transgressions upon himself, and had to die in consequence with them in the wilderness, without taking possession of the promised land, "Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel." It certainly does appear, therefore, that his righteousness justified them, as there was nothing improper in his conduct, and therefore he had to bear their iniquities. But the prophet sums it up more exactly than I can, he says, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." Did not Moses intercede for them, Jesus had rather to do it, and did so, for himself. Moses bore the sin of many, Jesus none but his own, his less guilty and misguided disciples were few and far away, too contemptible like Peter, and too ignorant and too easily deceived to be brought to trial, and judged worthy of punishment. Was not Moses numbered with the transgressors, and did he not, with them, pour out his soul unto death, and his portion during life and after death was and has been with the great, and his spoil, while he led the Israelites and in the hands of his successor, was with the strong? Christians may think it greatness, but those not deprived of their senses, esteem it no honour figuring on the gallows, and dying like a dog; yet this is their fulfillment of the entire prophecy throughout, in whole and in part.

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# THE INDEPENDENT SPECTATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

## SPINOZISM

### AND THE "WESTMINSTER REVIEW."

THE regular readers of this periodical will remember, that in No. 11, under the head of "Philosophical Digests," an article appeared whose double object was to interpret the metaphysical speculations of Benedict Spinoza, and, at the same time, shield his "blessed memory" from the religious imputation so inconsistently, as well as unfairly, cast upon him by a writer in the "Westminster Review." The reviewer asserted Spinoza to have been "a God-intoxicated man;" if, however, I do not greatly err, my article proved him an atheist—aye, "a gross atheist of the D'Holbach school." The reviewer assured the astonished world that the *resemblance* of spinozism to atheism is "merely verbal," whereas the article in question establishes that the *difference* between atheism and spinozism is "merely verbal." But though I think thus complacently of my former article, it no sooner went to press than I was convinced, that though a good first-blow, it should be speedily followed by another, which, if well-planted, I felt convinced would be a *coup de grace* for the tribe of sophists who, like the Westminster reviewer, are anxious to make a "pious thinker" of Spinoza, at the very same instant that they are so maddened with affright at his "shuddering blasphemies," as to propose "escaping spinozism by denying the possibility of metaphysical science.\* These, cautious reader, are the reviewer's words, not mine; they are the words of him, who calls that very spinozism, he is so anxious to escape from, a "most religious philosophy," and bitterly complains that it should be "almost universally branded with atheism;" who quotes, *con amore*, some nonsense of the "pious Schleiermacher," about the breast of its author being "filled with religion and religious feeling," yet, as though possessed by some demon of inconsistency, declares, in another part of the very same review, that he shrinks back from the consequences whither that "most religious philosophy" leads him—that he gazes over the awful abyss to which the reasonings of the pious, God-intoxicated Spinoza has dragged him, and seeing naught but chaos and despair, refuses to build his temple there—that he is so anxious to detect a flaw, a fundamental flaw, in this most religious philosophy, that, to use his own forcible expressions, he "Retraced his steps with hurried earnestness, to see if no false route had been taken; examined every one of its (God-intoxicated) author's positions, to see if there be not some secret error, parent of all other errors"—but, he continues, "Arrived at the starting-point, we are forced to confess that we have found no error—that each conclusion is but the development of antecedent positions: and yet the mind refuses to accept the conclusions."

\* See the "Westminster Review" for April, 1843, article Spinoza's Life and Works.

What to make of such a reviewer as this, I really do not know. It would be difficult, methinks, to cite a case of more glaring inconsistency, or, rather, self-contradiction. I can only acquit him of ludicrous stupidity by supposing that, like the elder Brutus, he simply acted the fool for a sublime purpose. Greater men than this reviewer have often done so, perhaps too often, and, filled as I am with admiration of his intellect, I am strongly inclined to this charitable view of the case. But let us see how he contrived to get out of the religious trap Spinoza had set. Let us see how he justifies his statement, that Spinoza's most religious philosophy "has a *logical*, not a *vital*, truth." After making the conflicting admissions already remarked upon, he proceeds thus:

This, then, is the state of the inquirer: he sees a vast chain of reasoning, carried on with the strictest rigour. He has not been dazzled by rhetoric, nor confused by illustrations. There has been no artful appeal to his prejudices or passions; he has been treated as a reasoning being, and has no more been able to doubt the positions, after once understanding the definitions and axioms, than he is able to doubt the positions of Euclid. And yet we again say, that the conclusions are repugned, refused; they are not the truth the inquirer has been seeking; they are no expressions of the thousand-fold life whose enigma he has been endeavouring to solve.

Unable, himself, to see where this discrepancy lies, he turns with, impatience, to the works of others, and seeks in criticisms and refutations an outlet from his difficulty. But—and it is a curious point in the history of philosophy—he finds that this bold and extraordinary thinker has never been refuted by any one meeting him on his own ground. Men have taken up separate propositions, and having wrenched them from their connexion with the whole system, have easily shown them to be quite at variance with the systems of the refuters. This is easy work. On the other hand, the inquirer finds that the great metaphysicians of Germany adopt Spinoza's fundamental positions; differing with him only on points of detail or of language. In their works the consequences do not look so appalling, because they are adorned with lofty names and splendid eloquence; but the difference is only verbal. Is there, then, no alternative? Must I accept Spinoza's system, repugnant as it is? Such is the inquirer's perplexity.

Such are the confessions of this reviewer. He likens Spinoza's reasoning to a vast chain, carried on with the strictest rigour. He admits that no attempt was made by that "extraordinary thinker" to dazzle by rhetoric, confuse by illustrations, or to artfully appeal to prejudices and passions. He even goes so far as to allow that an individual is no more able to doubt Spinoza's positions, after once understanding his definitions and axioms, than he is able to doubt the positions of Euclid. But still the reader will perceive that, though he so freely makes these staggering confessions, though he declares spinozism has not been refuted by any one meeting its author on his own ground, he has no appetite for the "appalling consequences" of such a system, adorned as they are with "lofty names and splendid eloquence," by "the great metaphysicians of Germany, who have adopted Spinoza's fundamental positions." No, this clever reviewer does not fancy these consequences, religious as they are, and pitifully exclaims, "Is there no alternative? Must I accept Spinoza's system, repugnant as it is?"



All this is very amusing, and what follows is no less instructive, as the reviewer hits upon what he conceives a happy mode of escaping so repugantly-religious a system, and, in vulgar parlance, giving the go-by to the God-intoxicated man. In short, he boldly endeavours "to point out the fundamental error of spinozism," which is, that "The correct definition of a thing includes and expresses nothing but the nature of the thing defined." This, says our reviewer, is an error, which being fundamental to spinozism, nothing more is necessary than to remove it, for then down must come the "most religious philosophy," which has so unaccountably and shamefully been "branded as atheistical." These of course are not the reviewer's words but mine, nevertheless they express his meaning. His position is, that those "Who accept the verdict of the mind, as not merely the *relative*, but also the *perfect, absolute truth*," must fly to spinozism as a philosophical refuge; for, he observes, to believe in the possibility of knowing "things in themselves" (and not simply their appearances to us), which is the ontological assumption, you must also believe with Spinoza, that every clear idea is the actual and total image of some thing as it exists in external nature. If you do not believe that your knowledge is absolute, and not simply relative, you have no sort of ground for belief in the possibility of ontology. Again, he declares, as his "firm conviction," that no believer in ontology, as a *possible science*, can escape the all-embracing dialectic of Spinoza. To him who believes that the human mind can know *noumena* as well as *phenomena*—who accepts the verdict of the mind as not merely the *relative*, but the *perfect, absolute*, truth—we see nothing, humanly speaking, but spinozism as a philosophical refuge.

This statement must be comprehended before it can be appreciated; but as it is worded, there are, I imagine, few who can comprehend it, indeed, I strongly suspect that its concoctor does not comprehend exactly what it means. "Out of one foolish word may start one thousand daggers," some sage has said, and the saying is not wide of truth. How careful, then, ought we to be in the use of words. How determined only to apply and receive them in a clear, rational sense. If the reviewer had strongly felt the necessity of discarding all words save those expressive of actual phenomena, his readers would have been much more benefitted than they are now likely to be, and I spared the trouble of writing this article.

It seems to me that the reviewer has made sundry radical mistakes, for, in point of fact, neither Spinoza, nor any other atheist, ever "believed in ontology," if by the word ontology is to be understood the science of *being*, as distinguished from *phenomena*, or the science of *nature*, apart from natural appearances. It is plain enough, indeed it is self-evident, that the knowledge of *appearances* makes up the sum total of human knowledge. There is no other conceivable kind of knowledge. One *appearance* is called a *table*, another *appearance* is called a *rose*, a third *appearance* is called a *man*, and to other *appearances* other names are given. How ridiculous it would be to hear an individual talk about knowing men, roses, tables, or any other things, "*in themselves*," yet this reviewer would make the world believe that Spinoza talked thus ridiculously. He tells us that "Ideas are the images, as they exist in relation to us, but not the formulæ, of things as they exist in themselves;" that we cannot get deeper than phenomena, and then proceeds to ask, "If every way we turn a thing we can only get an *appearance* of it, and cannot absorb its being in our own, how shall we speculate on things in themselves? If we cannot penetrate the essence of a flower, how shall we penetrate the essence of God?"

Now, I allow, and so, I presume, will all who receive as unshakable truths the "fundamental errors" of spinozism,

that we cannot get deeper than *phenomena*; that, turn things as we may, we can only get an *appearance* of them, and as we are totally unable to absorb their being into our own, that we cannot speculate on "things in themselves." But the point to be settled is "*are there things at all?*" If there *are* things, the question whether ideas are or are not the actual images of those things, is comparatively trivial. Of what consequence can it be to the question of spinozism, whether the moon is round of itself or in itself. To us it appears round, in other words, relatively to us, *it is round*, but whether the moon be round, square, or no shape at all, is of no practical importance, and has nothing whatever to do with the present question.

As to *perfect, absolute truths*, there is clearly nothing, relative to human action or human existence, which can be *absolute*. All truths are *relative*, and when Spinoza said that the *subjective idea* is the complete image of the *objective fact*, he could not mean that the same objects always excite in us the same ideas, for even infants know that their ideas of things are contingent upon what may be termed their *subjective condition and relationship to objective facts*. When he said, "Whatever I clearly know, is true; true not merely in reference to my conception of it, but in reference to the thing known," he could not mean that the acutest human senses can by possibility become cognisant of more or less than *appearances*. All truth is conceptual, or there is no truth, and it is nothing short of rank insanity to suppose so profound a thinker as Spinoza embraced the preposterous fallacy that there can be either truth or falsehood irrespective of human conceptions. Is it likely that he who the reviewer allows "Showed that *order* was a thing of the imagination, as were also *right* and *wrong*, *useful* and *hurtful*, these being merely such in relation to *us*, should have believed in the possibility of "knowing things in themselves, in any other sense than that here explained?"

No doubt Spinoza thought that "Every clear idea is the actual and total image of some thing as it exists in external nature." If he did not, I do; understanding by actual and total image, the whole appearance. That all ideas are derived from appearances, I need not set about proving, Locke has settled that question, none now being found to dispute the general accuracy of that great philosopher's reasonings, save a few unteachable individuals, who are mightily desirous to throw society back upon the wisdom of the dark ages. All but these miserable victims of prejudice are aware that there are no ideas, however wild or extraordinary, which have not their types in the world of matter, that only world with which sense and experience are ever likely to make us acquainted. David Hume, in his admirable essay "Of the Origin of Ideas," observes, that:

Nothing, at first view, may seem more unbanded than the thoughts of man, which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. To form monsters and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs it no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty, the thought can, in an instant, transport us into the most distant regions of the universe—or even beyond the universe, into the unbounded chaos, where nature is supposed to lie in total confusion. What never was seen or heard of may yet be conceived, nor is anything beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction.

But though thought seems to possess this unbanded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. When we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, gold and mountain, with which we were formerly acquainted. A virtuous horse we can conceive, because, from our own feelings, we can conceive virtue, and this we may unite to the figure and shape of a horse, which is an animal fa-

miliar to us. In short, all materials of thinking are derived either from our inward or outward sentiment, the mixture and composition of these alone belongs to the mind and will. Or, to express myself in more philosophical language, all our ideas, or more feeble perceptions, are copies of our impressions, or more lively ones.

Thus Hume, whose authority, however, I hardly feel myself justified in citing to support the palpable truth that ideas are derived from things, whatever direction opinions may take as to their being the express images of things. Indeed, as already remarked, whether our ideas are only true *relatively*, or what the Westminster reviewer calls *absolutely* true, does not in the least affect the philosophy of spinozism. If the existence of a thing, or the thing called universe be admitted, spinozism *must* be true. The real question between it and its opponents, is not whether the human brain reflects truly what is, as it is, absolutely speaking, but whether it reflects truly what is, as it is, relatively speaking. But supposing it *proved* that mind by no means reflects things as they are in themselves, as the reviewer pretends Spinoza thought, his system would in no wise be shaken or distorted by such proof. It is enough for the advocates of spinozism, if its opponents grant our knowledge of appearances—for, as we give the name of *appearances* to all the effects produced on us by things, the existence of things is of course implied throughout. Now, if things exist, according to the philosophy of Spinoza, they ever did, and ever will exist. Under the term substance, he included all things, or the universe, and it is only necessary for those who still are sceptical as to the "gross atheism" of Spinoza, to glance at his definitions, axioms, and propositions, printed in INVESTIGATOR, No. 11. There they may see the *universal substance* defined as "That which exists of itself, and is conceived *per se*; that is, the conception of which does not require the conception of any thing else as antecedent to it." There they may see, in definition 6, God confounded with the substance, consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses an infinite and eternal essence—they may see such axioms as these which follow:

"Things that have nothing in common with each other, cannot be understood by means of each other.

"A true idea must agree with its original in nature.

"Whatever can be clearly conceived as non-existent, does not in its essence involve existence."

Which axioms, if sound, are fatal to the idea of one or many Gods. They may see it broadly laid down as demonstrated proposition, that "there is nothing out of ourselves (extra intellectum) but substance and its modes"—and proposition 6 declares, "one substance cannot be created by another substance"—they may see—but here I stop, for if they only see so much, they will have seen more than sufficient, if not absolutely glutinous in matters of evidence, to satisfy them that the metaphysical philosophy of Spinoza, so far from being "most religious," is utterly irreconcilable with any imaginable religion—and its author, so far from being drunk with godliness, was filled with wisdom, the *wisdom of atheism*—that wisdom which, though it passeth all theologic understanding, is perfectly comprehensible by men of sense, who prefer the realities of nature to the idealities of unnaturalism.

## MORAL, OR PHYSICAL, FORCE.

When doctors disagree, who shall decide the point?

In spiritual and temporal matters, on moral and on physical force, there may be a variety of opinions; but the character of Christ being a mass of contradictions, and all his sayings, doings, and history, going by the rule of contraries, the opi-

nious formed of christianity must be various and clashing. We think Mr. Lane Fox, or *Fox Lane, the donkey*, as he is called in France, delivered himself very orthodoxly on scripture, if he erred in proposing its application to parliament. The oratory of Mr. L. F. generally provokes a laugh, and therefore he had the modesty to share this merit with the scripture. Conscious, too, how closely his own reason was allied to that found in God's word, he would not simply trust to the inspiration which every christian is sure of having from heaven, but actually would pay scripture the compliment of quoting it in defence of his argument, though well aware it would draw down the ridicule of the house. "He would have to quote scripture in defence of his argument (oh!); yes, it had been stated to him that if he did so he would be laughed at (laughter). He agreed with Graham, that the time was arrived that was pointed to by *Christ* himself, when he said that the *sword* must be drawn in defence of the church. He believed that nothing but *war* could now settle the question between this country and Ireland. What were the words of scripture? 'And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoe, lacked ye anything? And they said nothing. Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And they said, lord, behold here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.' Now, referring to the history of the world, had the period ever arrived when the sword was drawn in defence of the church? No, that time had never arrived yet—he believed it had now arrived (laughter)." This gentleman sends a note to the "Times," in explanation of his speeches, and quits the protection which parliament throws over a man's language, and presents himself as a champion to the public, another Saint George to slay the dragon. "I had come to the conclusion (says he) that nothing but applying the *lancet* and *shedding* much *blood* would cure the delirium under which England and Ireland were now labouring. I tell you, sir, for the information of the people of England, that I am a fighting man, and it shall not be long before I am up to my horse's reins in the blood of *infidels*. There are some who will say that such language is not warranted in scripture—but I say that it is warranted in *every* page of scripture. I have showed the House of Commons that the elect of Israel, the offspring of those men who first believed the gospel, are planted in this nation, and to them belongs the true interpretation of God's word. There are some lion's whelps in this nation, tried, proved, and justified, and ready, at a moment's warning, to spring up ready-made warriors. They will take their unbelieving brethren by the hand, and plant them in their own land again, and will soon put to silence the rising popery of the Oxford school. I have hitherto been robed in the garb of folly, and under that disguise have probed the brains of our rulers, and found nothing; I have now done with folly, and am a true witness of what St. Paul says, 'that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of the world.' You will oblige me by inserting this letter; it will comfort many an honest meaning heart. Fools may stumble at it, and let them *stumble and be damned*."

If this had been said by one of the people, we should never have heard the end of the wild excesses of revolution, the lawlessness, the savage ferocity, and the unbridled passions of democracy. If Mr. Lane Fox were not religious, the pulpits of all the halls would have thundered against atheism. If an unbaptised infidel had uttered such sentiments, the cry would have re-echoed of more churches and church education for the people. If a chartist had spoken as above, he would have been tried for sedition—and any jury would have



found him guilty of uttering words endangering the peace. If he had spoken of individual, instead of wholesale, slaughter, he would have been brought up before the magistrates, as in late cases, and sent to a madhouse. But the oracle speaks from No. 3, St. James's-square, the person of the prophet was the son-in-law of a duke—he is a sacred warrior in defence of state and church, and if they do not look forward to the execution of his threats, at any rate the wholesale slaughter of the people is a capital joke.

It happened that at the time these speeches, and this comment, of Mr. Fox appeared in the papers, the Universal Peace Convention was sitting. "War (said the Rev. J. Hargreaves) was inconsistent with the old and new testament—even Moses himself objected to soldiers being admitted into the tabernacle for a certain time after *having been engaged in war*. It was a violation of the *commandments* of God and the *principles* of the bible—it was diametrically opposed to the *mission* of Christ and the *doctrines* inculcated by him; it was directly opposed to christianity. One might as well attempt to unite light and darkness, life and death, as war and christianity." Here are two men who read the bible very differently—one of them may certainly shock his hearers, or excite their risibility, when, at the present time, he gives the plain reading, and what Newman calls "the plain facts recorded in the bible," which create "Some secret feeling of disrespect towards the writers, as if, even were the case as bad as they make it appear, it had been more judicious and humane to have said nothing about it." The physical force interpreter can read—but the peace conventionalist, the moral force christian, cannot read his bible, nor, in rejecting therein what is contrary to all notions of peace, and in favour of war, adapting the past to the present, is he possessed of that faith which the puseyites say is necessary to believe in the reality of that which is considered "As a proof how much better the world now is than it was once—how much more enlightened, refined, intellectual, manly." Mr. S. Crawford, M.P., a man of the people, followed in the same train of cant and falsification—"For his part, he should wish to see the influence of England extended over the whole world, to carry out the principles of our blessed redeemer for the promotion of peace on earth, and good-will amongst men generally. These were the principles inculcated by the redeemer. War was a gross violation of all christian principles, and directly calculated to prejudice the reception of evangelical truth in heathen nations." If one truth were ever more firmly established than any other, it is, that the religious wars, before comparatively unknown to the world, were introduced and made universal by christianity. Such Jesus inculcated—and if he did not, only the greater fool must he have been to have taught what had that effect, and which, therefore, was misunderstood by all who heard it. If his mission had been peace on earth, and good-will towards men, could people have been eighteen hundred years trying to work it out by fire and sword? The appeal to England is most unfortunate, who sends missionaries abroad to preach a gospel of peace, bibles and a redeemer, whom the English profess to believe was sent for that purpose, when they are the only nation in the world who have a religious war upon their hands, and that a civil war amongst themselves. The only people who follow up the conquests of Mahomet, and impose a worship upon a people at the points of thirty thousand bayonets. Worse than mohammedans we are, according to Mr. Ellice, M.P., of Coventry, who said, "The church, it was so monstrous an evil, that he regarded Mahomet as a merciful conqueror in comparison of those who had founded its establishment in Ireland."

This universal peace convention aim at an object very desirable for humanity, but it is a mockery to establish it upon

christian principles. They might as well put an olive branch upon a barrel of gunpowder and lighted match—an explosion would take place, and the pledge of peace would be lost, as all charity among men will, and ever has, disappeared, in convulsion, committed to the tender mercies of such a combustible as the christian religion. The nature of gunpowder cannot be changed, nor of religion, that which has always proved of itself the subject of the greatest controversy, and which has ever turned into controversy whatever other matter it ever touched (witness education in 1843), can never be the basis upon which to establish universal peace. After several days spent by this society in making the subject of peace and war entirely a question of christianity, they ended their sittings by one practical motion. In this motion they were obliged to leave out all mention of christianity—a tacit allowance that if they had introduced it they would have aroused all those feelings of animosity which they had met to extinguish. One speaker was called to order for stigmatising popery as the church that propagated christianity by war—and what would the men who can ride through blood at the thoughts of papists have done, if it were insinuated that their zeal in God's service, with which they were eaten up as much as Jesus, was inconsistent with christianity, the bible, and the character of their redeemer? The Rev. Mr. Burnet briefly (he had need to be short on such delicate ground) proposed the following resolution, referring to the state of Ireland: "While the meeting unequivocally avowed its attachment to civil order and *good government*, it was nevertheless constrained to declare its serious alarm at the preparations which were being made for the preservation of tranquillity in Ireland, by the employment of military force, and recommended to the friends of peace throughout the world to adopt all peaceful constitutional measures, by memorials and petitions to the legislature, in order to avert so fearful a calamity." According to Christ, you were to hate your nearest relations, and the maxim, given its largest application, made a public as well as private duty, you could not render more acceptable worship to God than by showing your hatred to your neighbour in a civil war. However, they address themselves to the friends of peace throughout the world, no sectarian principle there, they avow their attachment to good government, and their aversion to the employment of military to preserve tranquillity—sentiments in which all parties may join. They recommend memorials and petitions on the subject, a laudible degree of activity in giving effect to their convictions, and giving a reason for the faith which is in them, that all infidels and atheists might emulate.

The *Times*, "the bloody *Times*," as it used to be called, whose occupation would be gone, if all the provocation of Billingsgate, and all the various overt acts of violence were to cease from their political uses, falls especially hard upon the hint of such a probability by the universal peace convention. Of all the instances of *fanaticism* in association, it says, this society in its propositions far exceeds all other diseases of the kind it ever fell to its lot to handle. But it points its ridicule with some justice to the speech of a French marquis, who introduced the two French revolutions as illustrations of the happy effects in the employment of moral force. As the *Times* says, "Coming over to lecture us on the blessings of peace, and holding up the three glorious days as an inimitable model for us—of disport, to play fast and loose with our consciences—to reconcile peace with war—having peace in war, and war in peace." It certainly is extraordinary, that sitting nearly a whole week, none of them, according to the reports of their speeches, could give examples of bloodless victories achieved by mere moral strength, and that the only speaker who appealed to historical facts, produced such amphibious, anomalous instances as the French

revolutions. The first could not arrive at moderation, and order, and peace, without years of civil war, and introduced the institutions on the continent, which date from the French revolution, at the point of the bayonet. In the second revolution of 1830, the French unfortunately laid down the sword too soon, and put the power of war into the hands of those who had preached passive obedience, and fled from the results of the contest. The consequence was, that being taken by surprise, they were not prepared to insist upon and see executed definite concessions before they gave up arms, and they accomplished the overthrow of one tyranny and the renewal of another, leaving it difficult to say whether they have most advanced or retrogressed in liberty since the change of 1830. The French have often since taken up arms against the government, expecting the same success as in the three days, and being determined to insist upon the execution of certain rights. But France has a physical force power, an army said to be greater than during the empire, that refuses all concession to the people, and establishes a military executive, the government of war, which wonderfully illustrates the order, moderation, peace, and mercy, enlived by the French marquis as arising from the three days. People will ever see things differently, arising from their interests and religious prejudices, and will call war peace, and peace war. Amidst this deception, which led to the perpetual sounding the changes on the peaceful instrumentality of christianity, it is wonderful that no one thought of mentioning its establishment under Constantine, as the result of moral force. Certainly, at the time, the empire was in a state of civil war, and Constantine thought of gaining the affections of a strong party, who, spite of their christianity, would fill the ranks of his army. Yet they arrived at those numbers which turned the scale in their favour, more by what are called moral appliances than are to be found in the instance of any other great revolution in the world. For three hundred years they were at it, making sure of heaven if they missed earth, talking nonsense, preaching nonsense, writing nonsense, quarrelling amongst themselves about it, not understanding it, yet wonderfully united—which very seldom happens with sense—in forcing their folly down the throats of other people, thrusting themselves into families, and getting the ear of the women, whom now we are told are to do everything for us, finally, sweeping before them all the philosophies, and mounting the throne of thrones—the conquest of the world ready made to their hands, and universal empire at their disposal. Though they occasionally created a row by knocking down images, and incendiarism was alleged against them, yet they certainly accomplished their objects without resorting to those means which are understood by war and physical force. From such a moral, or rather immoral revolution, may we be preserved, which took place eighteen hundred years ago, and from the evil effects of which we are not yet near released. A revolution which, ever since it took place, has endeavoured to enforce its claims upon mankind by the most horrible superstitions, spiritual hell-fires eternal, and the fire and sword of the temporal power. A revolution which made requisite the sword of religious warfare, and which required those loosened hordes of barbarians from the north, and a conqueror and tribes from the east, equal to the fanaticism of christianity, to shake the ascendancy of a religion which was only true in the prophecy, put in the mouth of the founder, of the confusion it would create, which only seemed a divine revelation, inasmuch as it was worse than anything human, and the decision of differences between divinities rather than men, so far making probable the alleged descent of God and the Devil from heaven and their presence upon earth, the tried, proved, justified, and ready made warriors of Mr. Lane Fox. Impressed with such

considerations as these, we suppose, the *Times* throws overboard christianity with an if, as having nothing to do with peace if it should ensue upon earth. Stating "The victory of true christianity over the world is never to be realised in the sense that consideration would imply."

### THE MAN JESUS.

WE constantly hear of the beautiful morality of Jesus. Those who are indifferent to the doctrines of christianity, remain christians because, from the force of early prejudices, they regard Jesus as the greatest moral teacher. Even infidels, and atheists, speak of him as a good man. How often do we hear of the meek and lowly Jesus, a character which this modest man gave of himself, in imitation of Moses? Had Jesus delivered the purest and the clearest morality, I do not believe the world could have so erred in its application. I never heard the excellence of a legislator consisted in making laws, it was impossible to execute, or the efficacy of a code considered to be in its utter impracticability. Had the morality of Jesus been such as we had not known before, and had it commanded universal assent, the mysteries of religion would have little signified. But when the moral doctrines have been such that they have produced the greatest possible evil that the sayings of one individual ever produced, I think it not only the duty of every man to oppose to the utmost the moral influence of such a person, but it at once disproves all the assertions of his divinity or any superiority over the rest of human nature. It is not only in what Jesus said, but in the actions of such a man, we are to look for the moral effects of his presence, who set himself up as, and is made, the example to all men. I therefore propose to consider Jesus as a man, not by any sectarian view of society, but by laws which have been of general enactment amongst all nations, by those broad principles and observances which have regulated uncivilised and even barbarian association in the transactions between man and man, and which are more or less obligatory on humanity from the necessities of its nature.

I also mean to contrast his own maxims, and show their contradictions, and the discrepancy between his sayings and his doings. I shall also show that though he said he came to fulfil the law and the prophets, that he violated not only the Jewish but the Roman laws, and in several instances made himself amenable to capital punishment. Moreover, that he disregarded all those moral injunctions which not made legally binding in all their details, were yet so frequently inculcated in those writings of his countrymen, which were considered sacred, and inspired by their God. In the examination of christianity, the truth or falsehood of the relations in the gospel has been made the subject of investigation. For the sake of argument we accept the statements in the new testament. We may incline to the opinion of Strauss, that there is no historical truth in the gospels, that they are a collection of mystical legends—but they are accepted by the world as a reality, and as such we wish to show that christianity should be abandoned. We are adverse to those protean metamorphoses of christianity, which would always find a truth in it, fitted to the philosophy of one age, the rationalism of another, the religious mysticism, and the combined transcendentalism, the pantheistic infidelity, of the present. On moral grounds we wish to disabuse the mind of the believer—we take christianity as it is, a report of facts which pass for history, and we wish human considerations and common sense to be the judges, whether they are worthy of our admiration and imitation.

In spite of all the laws, human and divine, which we shall



have to consider, scattered through the old testament, directed against a breach of the fifth commandment, and which formed the education of the young Jews, what is the first example we are given in the new testament of the "Growth of the child, his being strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, the grace of God being upon him, and his being in favour with God and man? When he was twelve years old they kindly took him up to Jerusalem, because he was so mischievous a boy—according to apocryphal gospels, they could not leave him behind. The young spark liked the capital much better than the sawdust and wood-shavings in the shop at Nazareth, and with his wise saws thought to kick up a dust in the Temple, prophetic of the tumult he would occasion, when he would teach, not as the scribes and pharisees, but as one having authority—kicks, blows, and ropes' end. Though his parents were some days in Jerusalem, and fulfilled all they had to do, yet this young God could not find time to transact the business of his father in heaven, but must needs fulfil the promise made in his name, and break his mother's heart. "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also," as old Simeon said, when he gave this odd sort of blessing to Mary and her child. Actually these poor people went a day's journey, thinking the young vagabond was doing the agreeable with some Santa Catarini in the caravan, and never suspecting that he was playing the truant at Jerusalem. All alone they had to tramp it back to the city. Let us only imagine the expence and the loss of business at Nazareth. It was not till after three days they found him. If he had no regard for himself in fulfilling prophecies, of course he had none in the case of the trinity of himself, father, and son, and therefore, in point of time, he kept them waiting a trinity of days in anxiety and suspense. This was in unison with the three days' silence this chatterbox of twelve years old was to keep in the tomb, when he came to years of discretion. "Son," said she to him, "why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" How affectionately they treat this young brute—the father, instead of dragging him out by the ears, lets the mother address him as "son," instead of, Oh, ye naughty boy! and remonstrate with him on account of the sorrow which his foolish conduct had caused her and his father—but the display of maternal affection, instead of paternal authority, produced no filial feeling on his part. When he addressed them, he threw his poor father, whom he was always in the habit of snubbing and cutting, quite overboard, and told them he had come to town upon the business of another father. This was no compliment to his mother, and if his father had passed over the adultery of his mother, and adopted the bastard, it served him right for his folly. However, the evangelist puts them down as a couple of blockheads, who, in spite of all the messages from heaven, still thought he was their natural-born child. Joseph forgot the angel, when he was minded to put her away privily, finding her with child of this very Jesus, and Mary had also clean forgotten that she was in the family-way of this brat without knowing a man, and had only escaped from punishment by humbugging her hen-pecked husband, now the victim of her adulterous progeny. We must suppose, therefore, the gallantry of the holy-ghost to be a fabrication of the apostles, in order rightly to comprehend what Luke says after the speech of the son: "And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." According to this construction, he did not practically curse his suppositious parents, making public their sins in his favour, and, like Hamlet, hold up a mirror to his mother, exposing her offences she had thought buried in the past, silent as the grave, which required spirits to come up and tell. No, he only mocked the innocent and unfortunate beings who thought to have given him birth. Extraordinary to say, "he remained subject" to them, this boy of twelve years old, when sticks were plentiful in a carpenter's shop, and he might have been stoned, had his undutiful conduct been represented to the elders of Nazareth. Poor Joseph never says a word, and we are told that "his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." This looks like guilt, and we must suppose them fools or knaves, but we must pity a mother who had to digest such sayings, and bear the gibes and sneers, the abuse and cutting reproaches of her rascally scapegrace of a son. As for Joseph, he received a sufficient hint at the age he should have apprenticed his son to his own trade, that Jesus considered himself quite above it.

The young man showed the carpenter he was no chip of the old block, broke his articles, played the runaway, and, as all the idle diones of priests, who date from his example, and do not like work on earth, but like to live upon other people's labour, declared that he must be about his father's business in heaven.

In John we have no mention of Joseph. But we are told his mother accompanied him everywhere. Elsewhere we find the people speaking of Joseph as alive. "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are not they all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?" John is, if it can be so, still more explicit, as to the life of the father during the ministry of his son. "And they said, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it, then, that he saith, I came down from heaven?"

We must, therefore, suppose the poor deluded woman had left her husband and followed her son! This was not the only instance of his associating to himself another man's wife, but it was too bad taking away his own mother from his father. Regardless of all the bad characters whose company she had to keep, and who were the beloved of her son, regardless of all the obloquy of the world, and much more, the brutal disrespect of a son for whom she had sacrificed everything, she played the part of humble assistant in exhibiting the mountebank tricks of Jesus. It seems a wedding-party had a mind to be jovial—in the east hospitality is universal, and feasts of conjuring, legerdemain, and dexterity are almost the only amusement of the country. No doubt, if they were there, Jesus, the learned carpenter, his mother, and his disciples, were introduced to show off their slight-of-hand. It was very opportune in giving a feast, to be able to hire some strolling players. Jesus's first public appearance was in this character, and, as usual on such occasions, was not called upon for his performances until the host and his company had finished their repast, and were "well drunk." Now for the wine trick, said the mother to the son, which was played off last season in London, by a German, Her Dohler, who changed water into champagne. Mary seems to have taken her time well, when they were well drunk, wanted some more wine, and could not distinguish good from bad, one thing from another. But Jesus was of such a surly disposition, he could not bear it to be suggested to him what to do. For the mere sake of contradiction, he must say, in effect, no, it is not the time to do it—though immediately he performs the trick. According to John, he expresses himself in the most brutal terms to her—instead of mother, he exclaims, "*Woman*, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." Some of the commentators try to mitigate this drunken reply, by saying that woman is not a term of disrespect. Common sense tells us that mother must, in all countries, be the dearest and tenderest term of expression in addressing a parent. Besides, the context shows in what sense it was used. "What have I to do with thee?" He would cut her as well as his father, if she did not mind her business. At any rate, though she might be a sort of suttler to the camp, he was not going to allow her any authority over him. In case of any assumption on her part, he had ready the awkward story of the holy-ghost, to show that he had nothing to do with her, she had no claim upon him. That woman, simply by itself, is not respectful language, and that Jesus knew how to use the other, is evident from his addressing his loves by their names. We have the two ways in contrast, and the difference very strongly marked in the end of St. John, when he first appeared as the promised comforter, after his resurrection, to Mary Magdalene. When Jesus said to her "*woman*," she did not even know his voice, but took him to be the gardener, wanting to know her business there? She, in reply, in an equally cold and submissive tone says, "sir," as a pendant to woman, which is exactly as one would answer to the other term amongst ourselves. Whereas the endearing title of Mary was quite sufficient to undeceive her, and to show her that it was a lover, and not a gardener whom she never knew, inquiring her errand, and about to order her off his master's grounds as a vagabond.

Mother Mary, meek as her son was proud and haughty, put up this kind saying with the others, in her overburdened heart, told the servants to obey him, let him take all the credit to himself, which, as the gospel says, humbugged his disciples, but not her who was in the secret. So far his pur-

pose was well served, if he had introduced real wine, or only hocuspoussed the water he gave to the drunken revilers, whose senses were probably too far gone, to be of very delicate discrimination. Besides the entertainment, he probably got well paid for such services by the bridegroom, and the governor of the feast. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.

She next must have been a witness, according to the gospel of St. John, to the row he kicked up in Jerusalem, and must have recollected what pain he gave her when he was a boy. According to all appearance, he had cut his father, and he took the very first opportunity to cut his mother. "While he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." As it is mentioned that his poor mother was standing without, he was probably sitting comfortably within the house. This God, who was to know the thoughts of men's hearts, either was not aware that his mother was dancing attendance, without any hopes of having an interview with him, or else he brutally left her there to support her aged limbs, conscious of her anxiety to have a word with him. It seems one who was not quite inoculated with this new morality very properly remonstrated with him on this indecent behaviour to a parent, thinking a statement of her case would be quite sufficient to arouse the ready attention of her son. What must have been the astonishment of the man when he answered, that he had no mother, and once for all renounced any connection with her and her children? Turning round to his disciples, he acknowledged a father in heaven, and did not speak of any other, but claiming every gull as a brother, sister, mother, leaving her name last, he let her remain where she was, and be carried off by her other children when she could stand it no longer. He was so irritated at this constant recurrence to the carpenter, his father, mother Mary, and his brothers and sisters, that seeing very naturally it was a cause of their unbelief in father, son, and holy-ghost, he would not perform his miracles there, but damned them all, and left the country. Mark relates, more in detail, the preceding story of Jesus cutting his mother, and adds circumstances which tell still worse for Jesus. It appears that Jesus, after marshalling the twelve, giving them power over Devils and diseases, naming the two fishermen he had purloined from their father, "Sons of thunder," and committing similar acts of extravagance, "they went into an house." We know that Jesus was a wine-bibber and glutton—we know what he was when in liquor—we may imagine, therefore, the scene that ensued from the following verse: "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard of it they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself." A very natural inference, and therefore a very kind action on their part, to make him forget his public character by drawing his attention to his more private duties. "There came then his brethren, and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren seek thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." So it appears he turned a deaf ear to his mother and her messages, and it was the multitude who spoke their sense of the matter. It appears they were nearly all sitting but her, and in more marked terms than in Matthew, he renounces her, and his brothers, and sisters, and adopts the mob in their places. What rounds of applause, what clashing of glasses, what hear, hears, and bravos, there would have been at this speech, if it had been made at a feast of modern christians! We may imagine what young England would do if a practical application of the saying, "Does your mother know your out?" came to pass—their mamas seeking them when they were deep in their cups, and had lost all reverence for maternal affection, and were bawling out each, "Jolly companions every one—damn the

old woman." If we are to suppose the same time in Luke as in Matthew and Mark, from the relation of similar events and circumstances, on the occasion he ill-treated his mother, in Matthew and Mark—according to Luke, he took the opportunity of casting an additional and gratuitous insult on the suppliant Mary. In Matthew and Mark, after repelling the charge of communication with the Devil, and repeating the incomprehensible story of the man, the house, and the seven Devils, comes the scene betwixt himself and his mother. In lieu of this, after the same precedents, Luke has the following: "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." In Matthew, one man had a sense of morality—in Mark, the whole multitude cried out at the offence, *contra bonos mores*—in Luke, a woman, having the feelings of a mother, thought to awaken the interest of a son towards his mother, and comfort her for the rebuff she had lately met with at his hands. But Jesus was a more jealous man than his father, was represented as a God, and though the compliment was to him, he would not have the least of it shared by her. The only time she was pronounced blessed in his presence, he would not allow what it has ever been since among christians, her peculiar title. No, said he, rather are those blessed who believe not in old Joseph or Mary, but in my father in heaven, who forego all moral duties, and are fanatical believers in what I tell them. Before this unnatural son was born, Elisabeth, filled with the holy-ghost, had used almost the same words towards her cousin Mary, which brought down correction on the woman for speaking. Luke makes Elisabeth say, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Mary quite cock-a-whoop, answers, "For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed," &c. Poor woman, she must have been sadly "scattered in the imagination of her heart," when the first generation after her, her own son, would not give her the title. The holy-ghost must have reddened in the face, if he were sensible of shame, at the lie direct given to his words, and Mary must have felt bitterly the deceit which had been practised upon her by her seducer. This was not the only instance he gave the lie to the promises made in his name, as, instead of peace on earth, and good will towards men, which the angels had proclaimed at his birth, he said he came to bring a sword into the world, and hatred between the nearest and dearest relations. The gospel of John, as it only records the marriage feast, so it omits the ill-treatment of his mother, mentioned in the other gospels, but it supplies some addenda, which serve to complete their relation of his conduct to his parents and relations. In John, when Jesus said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven," the Jews naturally interpreted it as a cut direct of his parents, and said, "Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?—how then is it that he saith, I came down from heaven?" To this Jesus replied only by a fresh assertion of another father than they knew, and no mention of the rest of his family did this heaven-begotten man make, who, we are told, grew in wisdom as in stature, and in favour with God and man, but who was totally ignorant of all literature!

## BLASPHEMY LAWS—ENGLISH AND SCOTCH.

### II.

IN an edition of Erskine's Institutes of Scottish Law, by Ivory, published 1828, p. 1026, par. 16, mention is made of blasphemy. The above individual was probably some relation and predecessor of the Erskine, chancellor of England, who owed part of his celebrity to his speech on the prosecution of Williams, for selling Paine's "Age of Reason." We shall see what a pure spirit of piety Erskine the second must have imbibed from Erskine the first—how, acting upon his organisation, and the effect of early external circumstances, it shone forth on the proper occasion, spite of being obscured by a devotion through life to wine and women. The writer on Scottish law, says blasphemy is the highest crime of all, it is high treason, treason against God, and was punished with death both by the Jewish and Roman law. Therein are seen the double blessings of christianity—first judaism and its



law being made part and parcel of christianity and its criminal code, and, secondly, blasphemy being made a capital offence by the Roman law, on christianity becoming the religion of the empire. Thus persecution was legalised by christianity. This was its first step when it got power, and became united with the state. Before this it practised illegal persecution, to wit, when Jesus assaulted the persons of the money changers and dove sellers, and his followers upset idols, spit upon them, &c. Jesus was actuated by the same zeal, the defence of his God, which has made those of his religion, when in power, enact penalties, even death, against those who attacked the divine majesty. The editor, Ivory, attaches a note, to say that this sanguinary law, with which Erskine seems so well satisfied, was repealed by the 53rd Geo. III., c. 160, 1813. Section the third of this act, passed to relieve persons who impugn the doctrine of the holy trinity, from certain penalties, says, "And whereas it is expedient to repeal an act passed in the parliament of Scotland, in the first parliament of King Charles the second, intitled an act against the crime of blasphemy; and another act passed in the parliament of Scotland, in the first parliament of King William, intitled an act against blasphemy, which acts respectively ordain the punishment of death. Be it, there'ore, enacted, that the said acts and each of them shall be, and the same are and is hereby repealed....Sec. fourth, and be it further enacted, that this act shall be deemed and taken to be a public act, and shall be judicially taken notice of as such by all judges, justices, and others, without being specially pleaded." Some have thought, probably from this act, that there was no law against blasphemy in Scotland, that the legislature had forgotten to supply the omission. But in England, statute law does not do away with common law, persons being tried for blasphemy, more generally by the latter than the former. In Scotland there is common law, and therefore we may suppose in that country, prosecutors might apply it to the indictment of offenders equally as in England. Erskine p. 11, says "It may be observed, that when mention is made of the common law in our statutes, the Roman is understood, either by itself, or in conjunction with the common law. When the expression is fuller, the common laws of the realm, our ancient usages are meant, whether derived from the Roman law, the feudal customs, or whatever other source." None of the authorities mention any feudal or other law relating to blasphemy, but we have seen that the punishment of death for the offence was partly taken from the Roman law, and therefore we may suppose it was in full force as common law. Hume seems to allow that blasphemy was a crime against common law, when he says, vol. 11, p. 514, "The crime with us does not rest upon the foot of common law; but has in all its higher species been brought under the regulation of positive statutes." Hume, on the criminal law of Scotland, (not David Hume), wrote during the last century, when the statutes of Charles and William were in full force. It is he who says the statute of William did not do away with that part of Charles's which punished with immediate death the railing and cursing against God, and the rest "Was in explanation and supplement of that law, which is said to have been found too narrow for the licentious opinions of those times," p. 516. This corroborates what I said in my former article as to the growing infidelity of the times, evinced by the preamble of the statute p. 12—711, in England. In Scotland they were not long without a victim—in 1696 Aikenhead was put to death for blasphemy. The editor of Erskine remarks in a note, he was tried on the 1st. XXVII. 216 statutes as well as at common law, clearly shewing the double nature of the offence.

Hume allows that Aikenhead was judicially murdered, as he was sentenced under the first item, he being found guilty of railing against and cursing God, when it was necessary that such should be the fact, and it was only made to appear so by inference from his expressions. Thus the moloch of superstition, when it had overcome opposition by the conquest of this island, effected by foreign troops, reared its laughty head, and required its human sacrifice. From Charles the second, to the "glorious revolution," there was not an instance of capital punishment under the act—when protestantism triumphant, not only obtained the suppression by law of every exercise of private judgment, but under the pretence of a statute, never before put into execution, illegally procured a victim to its bloodthirsty bigotry, in order to strike terror into the hearts of its opponents. Afterwards there was one Kinnimount condemned to death, but the

sentence was never executed upon him. Whether the 53rd George III. chap. 160, did away with common law or not, in 1819 was passed an act punishing blasphemy, which must have applied to Scotland as well as to England. Alexander's Scots' acts only refers to the statute which restricted the punishment in 1825, probably bearing on that in 1819, and on that in 1830, still further restricting the punishment. The statute of 1819 directs the seizure of blasphemous and seditious publications, and though the punishment is restricted for blasphemy, yet the regulation with regard to having such articles in possession may still be in force, which authorised the procurator fiscal seizing the effects of Messrs Robinson and Finlay. The correspondent of the *Oracle of Reason*, who has given particulars of the arrest of Messrs. Robinson and Finlay, and who has promised to communicate the terms of the indictment when served, may perhaps be able to give information as to the law on which the procurator fiscal seized the goods of Messrs R. and F. The procurator fiscal is a public prosecutor belonging to every county in Scotland, an officer peculiar to our neighbours, and perhaps he may have some powers that authorities in like circumstances, in prosecutions for blasphemy, do not seem to exercise, if they have them, in England. W. J. B.

### THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH.

MR. EDITOR—Allow me to supply an omission in my communication to you on the fifty-third of Isaiah, which not only will remove a slight error, but will give increased support to the hypothesis that the prophet was only sketching poetically an outline of the principal events in the history of the great Jewish hero. The five last verses of the thirty-second of Deuteronomy refer immediately to the circumstances at the rock, which Moses smote with a rod, and water came out, when he should have spoken to it according to the words of God, (Numbers). In this inadvertence, God is made to condemn him to die in the wilderness, though his fault arose from his anxiety to serve the Israelites, and was occasioned by their abuse of him, and their rising in rebellion against him, when they suffered from thirst in the wilderness. He had here literally to bear the punishment and be the absolution of their sins. They did not meet with the chastisement, which, for the same sort of offence, often less in degree, was usually liberally dealt out to them. Well might Isaiah say, therefore, on this occasion, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, the lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." As to the death and imprisonment in the wilderness, which are here given as the penalty of his sin, he apparently had already incurred those consequences, in the fourteenth chapter, on their account alone, when all save Joshua and Caleb, of those present, above twenty years of age, were mentioned as having to remain in the wilderness. It is not only so to be inferred from the text, but from the necessities of the case, when Moses, already an old man, would have to outlive all the younger to accompany, after the expiration of forty years, succeeding generations into the promised land. The mistake I committed occurred from the usual critical inaccuracy in the details of the bible, which, having made Moses suffer for the sins of the people, repeat the punishment on another occasion, when the real offender, whose original sin it was, were spared. In a rational sense this would appear merely done to give a cause for his not being able to lead them to the possession of the holy land in his life-time. He must expiate his own and theirs, as was mystically represented of Jesus, taking upon him the sin of human nature and bearing men's sins, before they could enter into the heaven of their hopes. I knew there were several instances, and I took the first and feeblest example of Moses having made intercession for them, having obtained their pardon, and having had to bear the consequences of their offences. In these, and other points, the fourteenth of Numbers is strictly corroborative of the prophet. I may here add, what was remarked to me, that Joseph of Arimathea is called the good man and the just (Luke) therefore it makes it additionally untrue, to say that Jesus made his grave with the wicked.

No. 17 will contain an Important Bulletin from the Seat of War, Edinburgh, with the Indictment of Robert Finlay.

Just Published,  
A SHORT AND EASY METHOD WITH THE SAINTS. By George Jacob Holyoake  
Preparing for publication, "PALEY REFUTED, in his own words," by the same author.  
The Library of Reason, published monthly . . . . . 0 0 1

LONDON: Hetherington, Holywell-street; Watson, Paul's Alley, Paternoster-row.  
And all Booksellers.—July 15, 1843.

# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

NUMBER 17.

WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

## IMPORTANT BULLETIN FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

Edinburgh, July 6, 1843.

WHEN taking leave of my London friends I promised them to furnish, week by week, through the INVESTIGATOR'S columns, a detailed statement of all interesting matters directly or indirectly connected with the progress of irreligious principles in Scotland. Only Irishmen, I believe, are allowed to make *bulls*, or, with perfect truth, I might say, that promise should have been kept had it never been made. Soberly writing, I am exceedingly glad the promise *was* given, as the fulfilment of it at the present important crisis in Scottish affairs, will be productive, not merely of pleasure to myself personally, but, I trust, great good to the world at large. The battle for intellectual freedom is now confined to this city—a city that ranks among the most magnificent of the world, whose inhabitants are renowned for their acuteness, their ingenuity, their love of all that civilises our race, and detestation of all restrictions upon the right of private judgment—yet it is here, in Edinburgh, the "Modern Athena," that a ferocious warfare is now being carried on against the diffusers of certain kind of opinions, because those opinions are obnoxious to a bigotted, truth-hating priesthood. These implacable enemies of human improvement are determined again to *disgrace* Scotland, by an outrage upon those principles, which, as protestants, it is their duty to strengthen and defend.

I reached this city on Sunday, when I found the friends of rational liberty in a state of feverish excitement. They received me in a manner the most heartily enthusiastic, and, judging from what I then saw, as well as what I have since seen, I think if the authorities persist in their present insane course, they will live to rue the hour they commenced it.

The infidels of this city are "thorough-going," and, certainly, taken all-in-all, form as compact, well-knit, and determined a body, as ever declared war against religious error. A little persecution will do no harm, but rather enable them to put forth that strength, much of which would otherwise have lain dormant. Such are my present impressions, and it is not often that I am deceived with respect either to individual character, or party *animus*. The moment I arrived, I set myself to the task of ascertaining the exact posture of affairs—the *position*, *spirit*, and *ammunition* of freedom's foes, as well as freedom's friends; and, at the risk of being classed among the many false prophets of these days, I unhesitatingly declare, that by making war upon the liberal booksellers of this city, his procurator-fiscalship, with those clerical bigots of whom he is the tool, will not put *them* down, but be themselves *put down*. What are the facts of the case? Robinson, a well-known publisher, caused to be posted, in very conspicuous positions, a certain placard, of which I here subjoin a copy:

## CAUTION TO PARENTS!

### THE BIBLE

AN IMPROPER BOOK FOR YOUTH,

AND DANGEROUS TO THE EASILY-EXCITED  
BRAIN;

*With Immoral and Contradictory Passages from Holy Writ.*

These "horribly blasphemous" words, it should be understood, appear on the title-page of a fourpenny pamphlet, lately published by Robinson, of which the placard was intended as an advertisement. The writer of that pamphlet is well-known here by the *élite*. He may be called *the Herbert of Edinburgh*, as I am informed that, like that excellent individual, he unostentatiously devotes his time, his money, and his talent, to the achievement of those great objects all enlightened reformers have in view. A few passages from the pamphlet in question, will enable our readers to judge what school of infidelity its author is a pupil of.

Neither the mohammedan nor christian doctrines would have spread far, if they had not had the aid of the sword, the axe, the fire and the fagot; the adults were massacred or driven by fear to profess belief in those dogmas, and the rising generation were, by crafty priests, educated in them.

Religious wars amongst christians, and deaths by the holy (!!) inquisition have cost the lives of sixty-seven millions of human beings.

One thing, indeed (says Mosheim), appears, at first sight, remarkable, that the variety of religions and Gods in the heathen world, neither produced wars nor dissensions among the different nations.

The massacre of St. Bartholomew, which occurred on the 24th August, 1775, amounting to 70,000 protestants, was one fifth greater than all the murders perpetrated at the great French revolution. Thus papists murdered protestants, all for the glory (!!) of God; and in later times, protestants murdered papists. *(The tithe-massacre of Rathcormac in Ireland.)*

Christianity, the priests tell us, was sent to moralise and civilise the people of the earth, which after a period of 1840 years it has not effected—in fact, it has most materially retarded civilisation. Would any science, such as phrenology, geometry, or astronomy, have been in existence even for a few years, if it had practically been proved to be as false a system as christianity is proved to be? No, not unless the followers of such false system could obtain power and wealth, and without such gains, christianity itself would have long ere this been forgotten.

Those persons can have but little idea of the sublimity of causation, who imagine that the creator of humanity inspired persons to write a book, which has proved a bone of contention, hatred, and bloodshed, to the inhabitants of this world—a world created for *happiness*, but owing to religion, a scene of *woe*. The Omniscent Creator never inspired the writers of the bible; if he did, his *good* attributes are forfeited, and *evil* alone is his character; yea, a *malignant* inferior to myself, as a moral and benevolent being, who would not, if it were to cause bloodshed, even throw a bone of beef into a kennel of canines, much less, do that which was to cause my fellow-creatures to *tear each other to pieces*; thus I am more worthy of worship than such a God, and, therefore, whoever says the creator of the world is the author of the bible of the Jews and christians, is a blasphemer, and can only be excused as an insane or ignorant person.

It is proved by returns from lunatic asylums, that religion is the most powerful lever that exists for overturning reason, and therefore it is a most *dangerous absurdity*.



This is strong language. It is not, however, the less likely to be useful on that account. Much of it I entirely agree with—there are, however, a few sentences contained in some passages just quoted, that my protest must be entered against, lest readers but ill-acquainted with me, should imagine they express my sentiments. That sentence, for example, which declares “The Omniscient Creator never inspired the writers of the bible”—I protest against, because it implies that there *is* an Omniscient Creator, which deists believe, but atheists do not believe—among which latter class of religion-opposers I rank myself. Again, I protest against the assertion that, “Whoever says the creator of the world is the author of the bible of the Jews and christians is a blasphemer, and can only be excused as an insane or ignorant person”—not only for the reason first given, but because if the world (universe) had a creator, he undoubtedly *is* the author of the bible of the Jews and christians. The Being who created the universe, supposing, for the sake of argument, that it really *was* created, must have been the author of all that the universe contains, and as the bible is certainly in the universe, he as certainly was its author. But though there is thus much of difference between me and “Cosmopolite,” I consider he has done the state excellent service by his pamphlet, which is redolent of strong thoughts, strongly expressed. That it should have thrown the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland into consternation, is exactly what might have been expected. The proof of its having done so, is drawn from the fact, that the procurator fiscal and his “workies” adopted their late tyrannical measures at the instigation of certain members of that assembly, who, it appears, had their nerves much shocked by the *placard*, but when they read the *pamphlet*, exhibited phenomena very analogous to those exhibited by a class of lunatics who are afflicted with what is popularly known as “St. Vitus’s Dance.” The procurator fiscal thought it “most tolerable and not to be endured—flat burglary, by the mass.” So away he went with a *posse committatus* at his heels, to the shops of Messrs. Finlay and Robinson (the former being just as out-and-out an anti-religious agitator as the latter), burglariously entered therein, carried off all the blasphemy books they could lay hands on, together with others from Robinson’s shop, of which I shall make particular mention presently, and arrested their owners, who have since been liberated on bail. *When* they will be brought to trial is known only to the *ninny-hammers* who have the regulation of such proceedings—but as to their *being* brought to trial, there can be no question. I was informed, only a few hours since, his fiscalship has ordered the indictments to be printed. That against Robinson occupies no fewer than 150 closely-printed pages. Finlay’s will, I expect, be equally formidable, both as regards quantity and quality. An anecdote relating to the latter, who is really a fine old radical, is worth telling. It appears that some of “*Paterson’s Trials*” were seized in his shop, in company with many other rich *moreaux* of blasphemy, whereupon the procurator fiscal stared, as stuck pigs are reputed to do, at its title-page, on which was inscribed “*GOD versus PATERSON*,” &c. What to make of so strange an affair, his fiscalship did not know—“God versus Paterson!” ejaculated he; “God versus Paterson! what is meant by *that*?” “Oh! (replied Finlay) it means, do ye ken, the like of this. Ye come to my shop, and, in the name of God, seize me and my books, which may be called, ye ken, ‘God versus Finlay.’” How his fiscalship looked upon receipt of this information, all may guess, but none save a Cruikshank can adequately pourtray.

Had only books and papers of the “God versus Paterson” description been seized in Robinson’s shop, this would have been a most glorious business—as an influential young man of the city said, in my hearing, “One of the best blasphemy cases with

which the people on either side the Tweed have been treated.” But unluckily for Robinson, and unfortunately for the cause of freedom, his fiscalship found not infidel papers merely, but also some numbers of the “*Exquisite*,” and other productions of a similar character. These latter, however, were not exposed for sale, even *within* the shop, but simply *kept* on some *back shelves*, of course, therefore, quite out of sight. Not many hours have elapsed since Robinson solemnly assured me, and there are many credible witnesses ready to verify the statement, that he studiously held back such vitiating productions from public view—only getting them *to order*, when he thought his general business would materially suffer by refusing to do so. My acquaintance with Mr. Robinson has been of short duration, it commenced on my arrival here, I have, nevertheless, seen as well as heard much of him, and my conviction is, that so far from being desirous to spread abroad any kind of information calculated to damage public morals, he has exerted himself, at no small personal cost, to prevent such information reaching his customers. Indeed, only booksellers can fully understand the difficulties with which booksellers have to contend. Many of their, *in one sense*, best customers, will satisfy their depraved appetites with an occasional dish of indecency. And who are these customers? The hard-working, poverty-subdued artisan? No, but the sprigs of aristocracy, and middle-class *gentlemen*, with more money than wit or virtue. These are the parties who patronise obscenity—poor men having something far better to do with their cash, than expend it in the purchase of such *luxuries*. I am convinced that there are not, at this moment, in Edinburgh, half a dozen rejectors of christianity, whether rich or poor, who would waste their time in the perusal of such filthy stuff, as is here alluded to. Christians are purchasers, and, therefore, the paymasters, of those mental scavengers who rake it together. Yes, I charge upon those who call themselves christians, the whole guilt of encouraging the sale of obscene, while they discourage the sale of all really useful, publications. Who but christian aristocrats and shopocrats support such vile prints as the “*Exquisite*,” “*The Age*,” or the “*Satirist*?” I do not include in this list the “*John Bull*,” for that scandalous print is supported almost exclusively by parsons. Infidels are the most determined foes of such productions, especially atheistical infidels, for these, of all the antagonists of christianity, are most decided in their opposition to every species of immorality—and I am bound to declare that atheists never will tolerate the mixing up or confounding of obscenity with the sublime philosophy of which they are the recipients. Those publishers who degrade philosophy by allying it with obscenity, can expect neither sympathy nor assistance from atheists.

These remarks are not dictated in a spirit hostile to Mr. Robinson, but they are called for at this crisis, in defence of that cause whose advancement is infinitely dearer to me than any individual interests whatever. I have already said that he did much to check the sale of all objectionable publications. He would, however, have done better, had he refused to sell them at all—and this, in future, is just what he will do—as he yesterday expressed to me his determination never again, under *any circumstances*, to give such trash shop-room—so that, in future, the Edinburgh christians, who *will* be fed upon such garbage, must go elsewhere for it.

It is fitting that anti-persecutionists of every party should understand Robinson’s position. He has long been a marked man. The authorities of “bonny” Edinburgh have a heavy arrear of spite to settle with him. From information lately received, I am convinced that parties were *hired by them* to order certain objectionable books and pamphlets, with a view to ulterior measures. The procurator fiscal was, unquestionless,

quite familiar with the contents of Robinson's "back shelves," before entering his shop. The harpies of the law, in their search for literary offal, knew well enough where to fix their claws upon it. The fact is, Robinson has been to them very like "blood-bolts Banquo" to Macbeth, and a conspiracy has been hatched to destroy him. I call, therefore, upon the Anti-Persecution Union to bestir itself—I call upon every friend of freedom to aid both Robinson and Finlay in their present unequal struggle with the priests of the "bloody faith." Finlay's conduct is above all praise. He is a trump—exhibiting in his own person the phenomena of an old man with all the generous enthusiasm of youth. Shame on the infidel party if it fail to act vigorously in his behalf. His crime was selling such books as "The Yahoo!" "Old Ecce Homo," "Life of David," "Paine's Aphorisms," "The Great Dragon Cast Out," and that terrible one in which Jehovah is unveiled. This is a crime every lover of truth should glory in committing—and the least those of them can do who are not prepared to be shut up in a prison for truth's sake, is to open their purses. Of Robinson's conduct, I have already recorded my opinion. Unguarded, and most unfortunate, it has been, but not criminal. The friends here are unanimous in their approval of his character, while they as unanimously condemn him for perilling the cause of infidelity by his imprudence. All that is past, however, and should be forgotten, or remembered only by other infidel publishers, as "a beacon of awful warning." Had Robinson printed nothing about biblical obscenities, he might have realised a large fortune by the sale of anything in that line. He assures me it would be quite practicable, for any scape-grace publisher, who would not allow conscientious scruples to meddle with profits, to safely amass heaps of money by the sale of obscenity. One fact, strikingly illustrative of the truth of this statement, is worth reciting. It appears, that when the Exquisite first came out, notwithstanding it was carefully kept in the background, he sold over the counter from eighteen to twenty dozen weekly. Had he pushed its sale, the profits would, in a short time, have been very considerable—but heartily abhorring it, and every other production of a similar stamp, he obstructed its circulation by all the means at his command, and succeeded at last in reducing it to an average sale of two dozen weekly. So laudable an example should be followed by all publishers, and *specially* by those of heterodox reputation. It has ever been the policy of priests to associate in the brains of their victims the ideas of infidelity and obscenity. They know very well that religion must go the moment a majority of society are convinced they can be more moral without it. Their anxiety, therefore, to associate the ideas of infidelity and obscenity in the brains of their dupes, is quite natural. Irreligionists may now be counted by thousands. I do not mean by irreligionists, your unitarians or deists, but atheists—the only consistent and thorough-going infidels, as Bachelier calls them, who reject the God-idea. These are the only radically irreligious men in the world—and these are the men who, of all others, are most interested in preventing the growth of vice, and checking every attempt to mix up indecency with the truly sublime morality of which they are the devoted champions.

In Mr. Finlay's shop no *morally* offensive papers were found—much to the chagrin of the searchers, I'll be sworn. They discovered a most excellent stock of the best possible blasphemy, which, as in duty bound, they very religiously carried off.

When Messrs. R. and F. will be tried is not known. No case of the kind has been brought before the Scotch courts since the trial of James Affleck for vending blasphemous books, in 1824, when Lord Chief Justice Clerk, before passing sentence, said: "This is the first justiciary trial of the

kind, and I hope it will be the last." Poor Affleck escaped with an imprisonment in the gaol of Edinburgh for the space of three calendar months, which "lenient decision," as his lordship styled it, was consequent upon "the candour and contrition of the prisoner, in pleading guilty," which, said his counsel (the famous Jeffrey), "Shows that he is extremely desirous to prevent the discussion of a case which his imprudence, and want of consideration, has occasioned." Affleck's account of the *reasons* which induced him to exhibit so much "candour" and "contrition" for his offence, is painfully interesting. In a letter to Richard Carlile, then in Dorchester gaol, dated September 1, in the year 1824 of the carpenter's wife's son, he observes: "I mentioned in my last published letter that I had commenced business as a bookseller in this city (Edinburgh), to have a better opportunity of coming in contact with liberal-minded men, and of disseminating such books as tend to uproot the christian superstition; but I have been rather unsuccessful in my attempts, and shall now relate what has been the consequence. On the 20th of February last, the sheriff of Edinburgh, with some of his clerks and officers, entered my shop, made me a prisoner, and commenced plundering the shop of such books and pamphlets as they thought fit, which they took away with myself. It seems to be the practice with the authorities in Scotland, when they apprehend a bookseller, or any other person whom they suspect to be of anti-christian principles, to seize their books at the same time. Whether these proceedings are authorised by statute law, I do not know; but such is their practice; perhaps such proceedings are necessary for the support of the holy christian religion, now in its dotage. However, I do not think it was just or honest to seize and carry away from my shop such books as are sold by every other bookseller, or even to take away any of my books. They ought to have been content with those purchased by their spies, as it was only upon them they could form an indictment. I was kept in close confinement six days, and no person, except my keepers, allowed to see me. During that time I was twice examined by the sheriff about selling deistical books. I told him that I had sold some, and did not conceive that I had done wrong, as I knew of no law to prohibit the sale of such books. I farther told him I had not publicly exhibited for sale books that I knew to have been made the subject of prosecution, as I had no wish to give offence to such of my customers as did not like them, but that I acted on a conscientious principle, and was convinced that there was no harm in selling deistical books to those who were anxious to have them, or to men who were of deistical opinions. That I had furnished the books which were now laid down before me to a person who informed me that his name was Mr. Smith, and who also professed to be a deist, but I now saw that his real name was John Nugent, and by his base proceedings I have every reason to believe he is a christian. The other person whose name was written on the title-pages of the book, as a witness that they were bought from me, I knew nothing about, as he had never made himself known to me.

"After the examination of myself and some printers who had wrought for me, I was liberated, on finding bail to the amount of £200, to appear any time when called upon within the period of six months. On the first of May, I was served with two indictments; the first contained the "Prayer of Nang-Si," and extracts from the seventh number of the ninth volume of the "Republican," "Jehovah Unveiled," and the "Age of Reason." The second contained the "Zetetic Society's Shorter Catechism," and extracts from the first and second letters of the President of the Zetetic Society, to the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and from "Queen Mab." According to the summons that was sent with the indictments, my trial was to have



taken place on the 17th of May, but it was put off to the 31st, on account, I believe, of the death of a daughter of the Lord Justice Clerk, the presiding judge in our criminal court. For some time it was my intention to make a defence, both of the principles which the books advanced, and of the sale of them, but after many consultations with my counsel, I was strongly advised by them not to attempt it, as any kind of defence, they said, would assuredly be the ruin of myself and family, nor would the newspapers give it the publicity which I expected. So, by the advice of my friends and counsel, I was induced to plead guilty of selling the books libelled, which, indeed, I had no wish to deny. Every chance of the proceedings of the trial being published was then at an end, which no doubt gave the court much satisfaction, and the Lord Chief Justice had previously cautioned the newspaper reporters concerning what they reported about the proceedings, and to make no extracts from the indictments. This they punctually obeyed, as very little was said about it, and none of the newspapers, so far as I know, so much as mentioned the titles of the books for the sale of which I was indicted."

Such was the treatment experienced, and conduct pursued, by James Affleck, in 1824. Those who are disposed to condemn his conduct should reflect that his judge had the power to transport him, and that he actually was threatened with the felon's doom of transportation if he dared to justify the course he had pursued. With regard to his treatment there can be, I conceive, but one opinion among enlightened men of all parties. The whole proceeding was a disgrace to its authors; and the record of it will ever remain a foul blot upon the page of Scotland's history. Here I break off; want of space, not want of inclination, prevents me farther enlarging upon this and other interesting topics, connected with the forthcoming trials. Next week my readers may look for a second bulletin from this place, which is literally the seat of that atrocious warfare so long carried on by christian bigots against the regenerators of mankind.

#### CHARLES SOUTHWELL,

Generalissimo (self-elected) of the Anti-Persecution Army  
On this side the Tweed.

IMPORTANT.—A report has just reached me, that the martyrs Finlay and Robinson are to be mocked by a trial, on Thursday, the 27th inst.—C. S.

Since the foregoing was written, Robinson and Finlay's indictments have been handed to me. There is not in either of them such *quantity* as I had calculated upon, but the *quality* has in no wise disappointed me. As that issued against Finlay is short and very spicy, I do hereby subjoin a copy thereof. Robinson's indictment is far too lengthy for insertion in these pages, but readers shall be helped to the marrow of it, in future bulletins.

#### INDICTMENT OF THOMAS FINLAY.

Thomas Finlay, cabinet maker, now or lately residing in Haddington-place, in or near Edinburgh, you are indicted and accused at the instance of Duncan McNeil, Esq., her majesty's advocate for her majesty's interest, that albeit, by the laws of this and of every other well-governed realm, the wickedly and feloniously publishing, vending, or circulating, or causing to be published, vended or circulated, any profane, impious, or blasphemous book, or printed work, or any book or printed work containing a denial of the truth and authority of the holy scriptures, or of the christian religion, or devised, contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, or

bring into contempt the holy scriptures or the christian religion, is a crime of an heinous nature, and severely punishable—yet true it is, and of verity, that you the said Thomas Finlay, are guilty of the said crime, actor, or art, and part, in so far as you the said Thomas Finlay, having by means and transactions to the prosecutor unknown, obtained a number of books, or printed works, of a profane, impious, and blasphemous character, containing denials of the truth and authority of the holy scriptures, and of the christian religion, devised, contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt the holy scriptures and christian religion, did in the course of the present year, 1843, or during some of the by-past months thereof, within the shop in Haddington-place aforesaid, then, and now, or lately occupied by you, wickedly and feloniously publish and circulate a book or printed work, entitled "ECCE HOMO! Or a Critical Inquiry into the History of Jesus Christ, being a Rational Analysis of the Gospels;" and bearing to be "Translated from the French, and published in London. Printed for the booksellers, 1799;" by lending out the same for hire, to some person or persons to the prosecutor unknown, and by exposing the same in your shop above libelled, for the purpose of being so lent out; and the said book or printed work is of a profane, impious, and blasphemous character, and contains passages denying the truth and authority of the holy scriptures, and of the christian religion, and devised contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt the holy scriptures and christian religion, and in particular the following passage:

(Page 39.) "Nothing is more simple than this narrative (meaning thereby the narrative in the holy scriptures, contained in the first chapter of the gospel according to Saint Luke, from the 26th to the 38th verse, or part thereof), if the least reflection is employed on it the wonderful will vanish; and we will find they have taken the greatest care to spare the modesty of the young persons who might read this relation. An angel enters the house of Mary, whose husband was absent. He salutes her, that is, pays her a compliment, in the language of the country, which, translated according to the genius of ours (the French), signifies, Good-day, my dear Mary, you are indeed adorable! What attractions! what graces! of all women you are the most lovely in my eyes. Your charms are pledges to you of my sincerity. Crown then my passion. Fear not the consequences of your complaisance—your husband is a simpleton—by visions and dreams we can make him believe whatever we desire. The good man will regard your pregnancy as the effect of a miracle of the most high; he will adopt your child with joy, and all will go on in the best manner possible. Mary charmed with these words, and little accustomed to receive the like compliments from her husband, replied, 'Well, I yield. I rely on your word and address—do with me as you please.' Nothing is more easy than to disengage the relation of St. Luke from the marvellous. The event of Mary's pregnancy follows in the order of nature—and if we substitute a young man in place of the angel, the passage of the evangelist will have nothing incredible in it. In fact, many have thought that the angel Gabriel was no other than a gallant, who, profiting by the absence of Joseph, found the secret opportunity to declare and gratify his passion."

(Page 74.) "He (meaning thereby our lord and saviour Jesus Christ) soon however found that his mission was too circumscribed in that place—but to acquire some *clat*, he judged it necessary to perform a miracle, that is to say, in the language of the Jews, some trick capable of exciting the wonderment of the vulgar. An opportunity occurred for this—some inhabitants of Cana, a small village of Galilee Superior, at the distance of about fifteen leagues from Caper-

naum, invited Jesus and his mother to their wedding. The married persons were poor, although St. John, who alone relates this story, gives them a steward—yet he tells us that their wine failed at the moment the guests were half intoxicated, or gay, and that the pitchers were found empty. Upon this Mary, who knew the power of dexterity of her son, spoke to him, *They have no wine*, said she, in an insinuating tone—Jesus answered her very roughly, and in a manner which evidently denoted a man warmed with wine, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* It may, however, be supposed that Christ had not totally lost the use of his reason, as he still possessed enough presence of mind to transmute water into wine, so that the miraculous wine was even found better than the natural wine they had drunk at first.”

(Page 87.) “Jesus having begun his journey in the summer season, felt himself oppressed with thirst, near Sichar, in the country of Samaria; an incident which gave rise to a singular adventure. Near this city there was then a well, known by the name of *The Fountain of Jacob*. Christ, fatigued with his journey, sat down on the brink of the well, waiting the return of his disciples, who had gone to the city in quest of provisions. It was about noon, when a female came to draw water from the fountain; Jesus asked of her to drink out of the vessel she held; but this female Samaritan, who knew, from his countenance, that Jesus was a Jew, was astonished at his request, as there was no commerce or friendship between the orthodox Jews and the Samaritans. According to the custom of partisans of different sects, they detested each other most cordially. The messiah, who was not so delicate as the ordinary Jews, undertook the conversion of the female heretic, for whose sex and profession we find in him a weakness through the whole course of his history. ‘If thou knowest,’ he said to her, ‘the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee, living water.’ The Samaritan woman, who did not observe Jesus having any vessel in his hand, asked him from whence he would draw the living water of which he spoke. On this the messiah, assuming a mysterious tone, answered her, ‘Whosoever drinketh of the water of this well shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water I shall give him, shall never thirst; it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’ Our female adventurer, who was a dame of easy virtue, asked for some of that marvellous water, calculated to exempt her from coming afterwards to draw any: Jesus, who from the discourse had been able to discover the profession of this woman, ingeniously got off from the business by telling her to go seek her husband and return to him; reckoning, perhaps, on being able to steal away when she was gone. But the lady relates to him her life, gives some details of her conduct, and thereby enables him to conjecture enough of it to speak as a conjuror. Accordingly, after making her blab, he tells her that she has had five husbands, that she has none at present, and that the man with whom she lives is only a gallant. Immediately the Samaritan woman takes Jesus for a sorcerer or a prophet; he does not deny it, and as he was not afraid of being stoned or punished at the moment, he made bold for the first time to confess he was the messiah.”

*Likeas* (2), time and place above libelled, You, the said Thomas Finlay, did wickedly and feloniously publish and circulate a book or printed work, entitled, “THE LIFE OF DAVID; or the History of the Man after God’s own heart,” and bearing to be published in London, by James Edwards, Ludgate-hill, by lending out the same for hire, to some person or persons to the prosecutor unknown, and by exposing the same in your shop above libelled, for the pur-

pose of being so lent out: and the said book or printed work, is of a profane, impious, and blasphemous character, and contains passages denying the truth and authority of the holy scriptures, and of the christian religion, and devised, contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt the holy scriptures and the christian religion, and in particular the following passages:

(Page 27.) “Saul, upon reflection, concluding it dangerous to execute any open act of violence against this young hero: politely hoped to ensnare him by exalting him high in favour, or to get rid of him by putting him on his mettle in performing feats of valour, for a deficiency of valour is not to be numbered among David’s faults. It was with this view that the king yet required of him an hundred Philistines’ foreskins, as the condition of his becoming his son-in-law. He produced double the number ‘in full tale.’

“This demand, after David appears to have filled the prescribed conditions, seems not only unjust, but, also, even making allowances for Hebrew customs, very ridiculously expressed. It must have been a glorious sight to have seen David bring the foreskins to Saul, strung, perhaps, on a piece of pack-thread, and dangling in his hand, or thrown across his shoulders like a sash! and if Miss Michal was present, how must her pretty little heart exult when the required number being told off, as many more were gallantly presented at her feet.

“We next find our young adventurer acting the chief character in a tragi-comedy, which will further display his title to the appellation of being a man after God’s own heart. There dwelt then at Maon a blunt, rich old farmer, whose name was Nabal. David hearing of him, and that he was at that time sheep-shearing, sent a detachment of his followers to levy a contribution upon him, making a merit of his forbearance in that he had not stolen his sheep, and murdered his shepherds. Nabal, who, to be sure, was not the most courteous man in the world, upon receiving this extraordinary message, gave them but a very indifferent reply, including a flat denial. ‘Who,’ says he, ‘is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I, then, take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give unto men whom I know not whence they be?’ Upon receiving this answer, David, without any hesitation, directly formed his resolution, and arming himself, with a number of his followers, vowed to butcher him and all that belonged to him before the next morning. And how was this pious intention diverted? Why Abigail, the charming Abigail, Nabal’s wife, resolved, unknown to her spouse, to try the force of beauty in mollifying this incensed hero, whose disposition for gallantry, and warm regard for the fair-sex, was probably not unknown at the time. Her own curiosity, also, might not be a little excited, for the ladies have been at all times universally fond of military gentlemen. No wonder, therefore, that Mrs. Abigail, the wife of a cross country clown, was willing to seize this opportunity of getting acquaintance with Captain David; and this motive certainly had its force, since she could not as yet have known David’s intention—we may observe, she was told of it by David at their meeting. She prepared a present, and went to David, saying, very sentimentally, ‘Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be;’ judging very humanely, that could she get him to transfer his revenge upon her, she might possibly contrive to pacify him without proceeding to disagreeable extremities. Nor was she wrong in her judgment, for we are told: ‘So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thy house, and see I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.’ But however agreeable



this meeting might have been to Abigail, we do not find that Nabal was so well pleased with the composition his wife had made for him; for when he came to understand so much of the story as she chose to inform him of, he guessed the remainder, broke his heart, and died in ten days afterwards. David loses no time, but returned God thanks for the old fellow's death, and then Mrs. Abigail was promoted to the honour of being one of the captain's ladies."

*Likes* (3), time and place above libelled,

You, the said Thomas Finlay, did wickedly and feloniously publish & circulate a book, or printed work, entitled, "APHORISMS, OPINIONS, & REFLECTIONS OF THOMAS PAINE," and bearing to be published in London, by R. Carlile, 62, Fleet-street, by lending out the same for hire to some person or persons to the prosecutor unknown, and by exposing the same in your shop above libelled, for the purpose of being so lent out; and the said book or printed work is of a profane, impious, and blasphemous character, and contains passages denying the truth and authority of the holy scriptures and of the christian religion, and devised, contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt the holy scriptures and the christian religion—and in particular the following passages:

(Page 14.) "CHRISTIAN THEORY.—The christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and yet it remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud."—*Age of Reason*, part 1.

(Page 15.) "CHRISTIANITY.—As to the christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of atheism—a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in a God. It is a compound made up chiefly of *manism*, with but little of *deism*, and is as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his creator an opaque body, which it calls a redeemer, as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces, by this means, a religious, or an irreligious, eclipse of light. It has thrown the whole orbit of reason into shade."—*Ibid*.

"CHURCH.—All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolise power and profit."—*Ibid*.

(Page 73.) "JESUS CHRIST.—I have examined the story of Jesus Christ, and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation, which, as Middleton wisely says, God has made to us of his power and wisdom in the structure of the universe, and by which everything ascribed to him is to be tried. The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God, as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All the means are human means—slow, uncertain, and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed, and therefore the whole is a fabulous invention, and undeserving of credit."—*Ibid*.

*Likes* (4), time and place above libelled,

You, the said Thomas Finlay, did wickedly and feloniously publish and circulate a book or printed work entitled "THE GOD OF THE JEWS, OR JEHOVAH UNVEILED," and bearing to be published in London, by R. Carlile, 55, Fleet-street, by lending out the same for hire, to some person or persons to the prosecutor unknown, and by exposing the same in your shop above libelled, for the purpose of being so lent out, and the said book or printed work is of a profane, impious, and blasphemous character, and contains passages denying the truth and authority of the holy scriptures and of the christian religion,

and devised, contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt the holy scriptures and the christian religion, and in particular the following passages:

(Page 28.) "Justice comprises the sum total of every moral quality; those, therefore, who ascribe moral perfections to this Being must be sadly put to it to defend the character which he has given of himself in his word. His priests have declared him to be a God of 'infinite justice;' what they mean by the expression I will not pretend to say; but if anything like justice can be discovered in those actions and commands of his which we shall select, then are all our common notions of justice vague and delusive, and there remains not the slightest analogy between that of God and man. If we turn to Genesis xii. 14, we have there an account of Abram's practising a gross fraud upon Pharaoh, offering to play the pimp in the debauchery of his own wife, and a similar one on Abimelech, chap. x. In both instances the lord rewarded the deceitful, lying patriarch, and punished the deceived and credulous kings, as a proof of his infinite justice."

(Page 43.) "It is not proposed to take notice of every angry fit the lord took, that would be to transcribe the remaining part of the Jewish history: the kings of Judah and Israel were continually giving him provocation. Ahab is said to have done more to provoke the lord to anger than all the kings of Israel that went before him. I. Kings xv. 33. It is no uncommon thing for drunkards and fools to behave in this manner."

*Likes* (5), on the 30th day of May, 1843,

Or on one or other of the days of that month, or of April immediately preceding, or of June immediately following, within the shop in Haddington-place aforesaid, you, the said Thomas Finlay, did wickedly and feloniously publish, vend, and circulate a book or printed work, entitled, "THE BIBLE AN IMPROPER BOOK FOR YOUTH, and dangerous to the Easily Excited Brain; with Immoral and Contradictory Passages, from Holy Writ. By Cosmopolite;," and bearing to be published at Edinburgh, by W. and H. Robinson, by then and there selling and delivering the same or causing it to be sold or delivered to Walter Emslie, now or lately city officer in Edinburgh, and now or lately residing in Morrison's Close there, in consideration of the sum of fourpence, or some other small sum of money, then and there paid by him to you, or to some other person to the prosecutor unknown, on your account, as the price of the said book or printed work; and the said book or printed work, is profane, impious, and blasphemous, and contains passages denying the truth and authority of the holy scriptures and of the christian religion, and devised, and contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt the holy scriptures and christian religion, and in particular the following passages:

(Page 3.) "Urged, by benevolence and conscientiousness, to a sense of the duty due to my fellows, I, in direct variance to the popularly received opinion of the bible, denounce it as a book totally unfit, from the obscene passages and unjust sentiments contained in it, to be put into the hands of youth; and knowing how few adults, from their not reading that book with attention, can know the disgusting language to be found scattered through it—and being aware that it is the custom of many children at school to find out the objectionable passages, and gloat over them to each other, until depravity is generated in their animal organs—and trusting that no parents who really love their offspring, or teachers who really wish for the moral cultivation of their pupils, when made acquainted that the book contains such pernicious passages, would for a moment longer (*unless depraved them-*

*selves*) allow their children or pupils to read a book undermining to all morality: I, for such reasons, venture thus to explain the nature of the book, and to exhibit the results of the religions derived from it."

"All the different systems of religion, which pervade the world originate from, and are kept in existence by either insane, ignorant, or roguish brains."

(Page 4.) "The Omniscient Creator never could have inspired persons to write a book, containing passages of a doubtful meaning, owing to which, in Britain alone, there are at least 90 different sects, each declaring that it is right, and all the others wrong; and uncharitableness towards those who differ from them, is the principal feature in the character of each sect of christians. I ask which sect is right? and what are we to understand by the christian religion? for what is christianity with one sect, is heresy to the other—and 'you will be damned, you infidels,' is the elegant phrase uttered by christians to those who differ from them in religious opinions; indeed, swearing is one of the results of the christian religion: all those vile expressions, such as 'devil,' 'damn,' 'hell,' 'God damn,' 'bloody,' 'go to the devil,' 'go to hell, and be damned,' 'God damn your eyes,' and many others, emanate from the bible—a book containing a little historical truth, mixed with a great deal of fiction. Humanity shudders at the atrocities that have been committed under the sanction of its pages, and woe to the man, *if poor*, who dares to speak doubtfully of the truth of that book, but, *if wealthy*, he may speak against it with impunity.

—'But he that believeth not shall be damned.'—Mark xvi. 16. [*Very charitable.*]

"No one doubts the meaning of the morals of the heathen philosophers, and their precepts, if universally followed, would lead all people to happiness; but the bible-morals, being accompanied by contradictions, obscenity, and mystery, are utterly valueless. That book contains portions of different chapters so *obscene*, that I scarcely think we could find a christian who would have the effrontery to read them in public. We find no such passages in the works of the rationalists of modern, or the moral philosophers of ancient, times. *A few of such quotations out of holy writ, will be found at page 26.*"

(Page 8.) "Those persons can have but little idea of the sublimity of causation who imagine that the creator of humanity inspired persons to write a book which has proved a bone of contention, hatred, and bloodshed, to the inhabitants of this world—a world created for *happiness*, but, owing to religion, a scene of *woe*. The Omniscient Creator never inspired the writers of the bible; if he did, his *good* attributes are forfeited, and *evil* alone is his character—yea, a *malignant* inferior to myself, as a moral and benevolent being, who would not, if it were to cause bloodshed, even throw a bone of beef into a kennel of canines, much less do that which was to cause my fellow-creatures to *tear each other to pieces*—thus I am more worthy of worship than such a God, and, therefore, whoever says the creator of the world is the author of the bible of the Jews and christians, is a BLASPHEMER, and can only be excused as an insane or ignorant person.

"It is proved by returns from lunatic asylums, that religion is the most powerful lever that exists for overturning the reason, and therefore it is a most *dangerous absurdity*."

(Page 11.) "Prayer is useless, as the laws of God, proved from the foundation of the world, are immutable. It is very unlikely that God, who made everything perfect, would listen to the insults of those who ask him to make changes which they imagine to be for the better—can a thing already perfect be improved? Prayer is the *insane* effect of *religious pride*; let the supplicants exert themselves to learn and obey the

natural laws, moral and physical, and they will find all will go well, whether they pray or not; on the contrary, let them disobey those laws, and all the prayers they can offer will be ineffectual in setting them right until they give up disobedience and become obedient to the natural laws. Yet christian hypocrites are continually building new churches, and, at enormous expense, sending *rogues* of missionaries to India, &c., before their own countrymen are converted, or even educated, and whilst millions of our fellow-creatures, in the most abject misery, are dwelling in mud-hovels, in cellars, in houses situated in wynds, lanes, and blind-alleys, without ventilation or drainage, a prey to malaria, fevers, drunkenness, and starvation, both from hunger and cold, and existing upon wages or parish relief barely sufficient to keep the vital principle in action. 'Women who confine themselves to such inferior work as shirt-making, stay-making, shoe-binding, &c., cannot make more, on an average, than sixpence a-day, and for this they must work from fifteen to sixteen hours a-day, and this in London, the most expensive city to live in in Europe;' no wonder that so many women fly to prostitution as a means to relieve the cravings of hunger, the dread of starvation, to escape from the poor-law bastilles, and the spirit-crushing effects of excessive toil."

(Page 15.) "Many christians affirm that prostitution always will be, and is necessary; if necessary, it must come from the Creator; then why is fornication denounced in the word of God?"

"But in the early ages of christianity it appears that fornication, and even sodomy, were the prevailing vices of true believers, for, by turning to the following passage in the Romans, and other passages in St. Paul's Epistles, we find him admonishing the faithful for those crimes. The bishops are to be the husbands of one wife, which leads to the conclusion that in those times the bishops had many wives. The apostle says: 'A bishop, then, must be blameless—the husband of one wife.'—I. Timothy iii. 2."

(Page 21.) "The practical effect of the christian religion on the happiness of mankind, is just what might have been expected, when we find its text-book abounding with contradictions and sentiments derogatory to the character of an omniscient and moral Being. No wonder murders abound, for it is a dangerous book to the easily-excited brain. Political assassins have generally referred to holy-writ as their authority—and governments who wage unjust wars have always done so. Such precepts as these cannot humanise humanity."

*Likeas* (6), time and place last above libelled, You, the said Thomas Finlay, did wickedly and feloniously publish, vend, and circulate, a book, or printed work, entitled "THE PROTESTANT'S PROGRESS FROM CHURCH OF ENGLANDISM TO INFIDELITY. Or Reasons for Declining to Attend Public Worship;" and bearing to be published in London, by J. Watson, 15, City-road, Finsbury, by then and there selling and delivering the same, or causing it to be sold and delivered, to Walter Emslie aforesaid, in consideration of the sum of one shilling, or some other sum of money, then and there paid by him to you, or to some other person to the prosecutor unknown, on your account, as the price of the said book or printed work; and the said book or printed work is profane, impious, and blasphemous, and contains passages denying the truth and authority of the holy scriptures and of the christian religion, and devised, contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, and bring into contempt, the holy scriptures and christian religion, and in particular the following passages:

(Page 44.) "Jesus seems to have had a stronger admixture of melancholy and enthusiasm in his character. By long brooding over the mysterious and ambiguous prophecies



and traditions of the Jews, his distempered imagination had suggested to him that he was the long-expected messiah. Several pretenders to that character had, a short time before, deluded vast multitudes 'by signs and wonders' (Acts v. 36, viii. 9), and had been cut off by the Romans. But Jesus proceeded with greater circumspection. He secretly encouraged the expectation of the Jews that his kingdom was to be a temporal kingdom, but, knowing the danger which he incurred, and the improbability of his literally fulfilling the prophecy, yet anxious to perpetuate his new law, he announced his own death, promising to return to judge the world with his followers, who were 'to sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' (Luke xxii. 30.) With the usual policy of religious innovators, he promised to those who submitted to his pretensions, glory and happiness, but to those who rejected him everlasting punishment. Never were curses poured out in a more copious stream than by the meek and holy Jesus, upon all who opposed his pretensions. Being low, illiterate, and credulous men, his disciples viewed him with reverential awe, and everything he told them, however mysterious or unintelligible, they received as divine. Verily the heads of these poor creatures must have been made giddy by the splendid promises of thrones, and recompenses 'one hundred fold' for their sufferings in this life, and in the world to come, 'life everlasting.' Such magnificent promises were sufficient to make weak-minded, ignorant men, complete enthusiasts, and support them through many trials and great sufferings to obtain these rewards."

(Page 55.) "But the most effectual means which the priests have in all ages adopted of keeping up the delusion, has been by enslaving the future man to the belief of their opinions, by imposing on him, while an infant, a creed or a name, when he is utterly incapable of judging what is right. Scarcely has the new-born infant seen the light, when it is made 'a child of God, and an inheritor of heaven,' merely by the sprinkling of a little water on its face, and the pronouncing of some incantations! and long before its reasoning faculties are opened, it is taught to believe, not to think—to repeat, not to understand—to worship, not to inquire. As the most proper and judicious means of informing its mind, and preparing it for the great stage of life, THE BIBLE, a fabulous and contemptible history of the infamous Jewish nation, and of the fanatical set to which it gave birth, a rich manual of insanity and discord, is thrust into its hands. Thus do the priests first brutify the minds of infants, and then ride the beasts they have made."

(Page 61.) "If error be culpable, the believer of any of the numerous discordant opinions about which christians are divided, can never be secure that he is not plunged into damnable errors—but he may rest assured, that in the sight of a God of reason and justice (such, indeed, is not the God of the bible) neither his mistake, nor that of the conscientious infidel, can be imputed to them as a crime."

And you, the said Thomas Finlay, having been apprehended and taken before George Tait, Esquire, sheriff substitute of the county of Edinburgh, on the 3rd and 7th days of June, 1843, respectively, emit and subscribe a declaration. Which declarations, as also the books or printed works severally above libelled, as also an inventory, entitled an "Inventory of Books, &c., found in the shop and room connected therewith, occupied by Thomas Finlay, at Haddington Place, near Edinburgh, on the 3rd of July, 1843," and the books and other articles severally enumerated therein, or part thereof, being all to be used in evidence against you at your trial, will, for that purpose, be in due time lodged in the hands of the Clerk of the High Court of Justiciary, before which you are to be tried, that you may have an opportunity

of seeing the same. All which, or part thereof, being found proven by the verdict of an assize, or admitted by the judicial confession of you the said Thomas Finlay, before the Lord Justice General, Lord Justice Clerk, and Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, you, the said Thomas Finlay, ought to be punished with the pains of law, to deter others from committing the like crimes in all time coming.

(Signed) ADAM URQUHART, A.D.

List of Witnesses :

1. GEORGE TAIT, Esq., Sheriff Substitute of the county of Edinburgh.
2. ARCHIBALD SCOTT, now or lately Procurator Fiscal of county aforesaid.
3. JOHN CRRERAR, now or lately Clerk in the Sheriff Clerk's office, Edinburgh.
4. ABLJAH MURRAY, now or lately Sheriff Officer, in Edinburgh.
5. WILLIAM McKAY, now or lately Sheriff Officer, in Edinburgh.
6. JOHN ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, Esq., Sheriff Clerk of the county of Edinburgh.
7. WILLIAM MACKENZIE, now or lately residing in Crosscauseway, in or near Edinburgh.
8. WILLIAM MURRAY, now or lately Criminal Officer, in the Edinburgh Police.
9. WALTER EMSLIE, now or lately City Officer in Edinburgh.

(Signed) ADAM URQUHART, A.D.

THE word God is void of sense, if it do not signify *universal cause*, and the active force that organises all beings which have a commencement and an end, that is to say, the Being, principle of all that which has no other than itself. Such has nature ever appeared to the eyes of men who have judged of what is by what they saw, and by what they felt. The people that we have pleased to call savages, seldom pass nature's boundaries, and the greatest philosophers, fatigued by long and useless researches, have been forced to fall back on the tangible and visible.—Dupuis.

IMPORTANT WORKS.

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STRAUSS Life of Jesus, Nos. 11d., Parts 6d., Vols. 1, 2, & 3, now ready, each	0 4 0
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LONDON: Hetherington, Holywell-street; Watson, Paul's Alley, Paternoster-row. And all Booksellers.—July 22, 1843.

# THE INVESTITATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

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WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

## SECOND BULLETIN FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

Edinburgh, July 15, 1843.

MAKE ready! present!—ye Anti-Persecution-Union people—as the time has come to pour in such a volley of infidel bullets upon the body of persecution, as shall riddle it from top to toe. The trials of Messrs. Robinson and Finlay are to "come off" on Monday the 24th instant, three days earlier than was anticipated—so that before this bulletin meets the public eye, their worship of Scotland's high court of justiciary will have played their parts, like good christians, in the "serio-comic farce," announced for the 24th, and most likely those really noble fellows, *not* their worship, will be surrounded by "christian evidences," in the gaol of this city. There is as little chance of their escape from the law harpies who have them fast in their orthodox claws, as there would be for that of a lamb, if fixed in the den of a half-starved tigress. That is, however, quoth the adage, a long lane which has no turning, and bad is the act of tyranny which gives no promise of admirable results. So far, indeed, from the infidels of Scotland having cause to despair at the present crisis—thanks to his worship, our active procurator-fiscal—they are likely to attain a position, presently, that all the world's fiscals may be defied to dislodge them from. The truth is, his fiscalship has furnished the infidels of Edinburgh, with what, without his invaluable assistance, they could neither beg, borrow, nor steal, namely, a christian fulcrum for their infidel lever. Fulcrums *sans* levers are "no go," but now that the thorough-bred infidels here have one, they will leave shifting the world to mathematicians of the archimedean school, and modestly employ themselves in lifting up, by its potent agency, persecuting christians—not so much as their man-god was lifted up upon the cross, as dogs set to bait bulls are occasionally exalted by these horned animals. The first fruit of Robinson and Finlay's affair, has been the formation of a "Scottish Anti-Persecution Union," which of course proposes to co-operate with, and "back up," all other unions now formed, or that may be formed to put an end at once and for ever to all meddling with the freest possible expression, publication, vending, or circulating of opinions. In the "North British Advertiser," of this day, a paper whose range is, I am told, wider than that of any other *Scotch* paper—appeared the following paragraph:

"BLASPHEMY PROSECUTIONS. Messrs. Robinson, publishers, 11, Greenside-st., and Mr. T. Finlay, Haddington-place, Leith-walk, have been indicted at the instance of the Lord Advocate of Scotland, to appear before the High Court of Justiciary, on the 24th current, to answer the charges of vending and publishing certain works deemed blasphemous. The philosophical and theological writings of Mirabaud,

Voltaire, Shelley, Palmer, &c., are among the works seized. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the intended victims to a harsh and stupid law, will receive the support of the friends to liberty in opposing the present proceedings of the authorities. An association has been formed here, under the name of the

### "SCOTTISH ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION,

"Whose object shall be to afford pecuniary, and every other possible, aid, to any party or parties who may be prosecuted, or persecuted, for the expression or publication of opinion—and in the present case, eminent counsel has been engaged.

"Subscription sheets lie open in Messrs. W. & H. Robinson's, 11, Greenside-street, and remittances from friends in the country may be addressed, 'To the Secretary of the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union,' at Messrs. Robinson's shop.

"Edinburgh, July 14, 1843."

When this paragraph meets the astonished gaze of his fiscalship, the hair upon his cranium will surely stand on end, as "quills upon the fretful porcupine." Like Macbeth, he will find his vaulting ambition has "o'erleaped itself, and fallen on the other side." Poor devil! how unenviable will be the condition of his rashly-sensitive brains, when he discovers, that by the cunning attempt to destroy two honest men than himself, he has become the parent of a mighty anti-persecution movement. *Cunning*, said Bolingbroke, pays no regard to virtue, and is but a low mimic of wisdom—a saying never better illustrated than in the person of his fiscalship. Verily, if he follow up *vigorously* the course thus *sagely* commenced, there is no end to the good he will accomplish. The famous Earl of Warwick was distinguished from all other earls of his name, as the "king maker," and if our "bonny" procurator fiscal do but persevere a little, he will be known and appreciated over the whole world as the *infidel maker*. So be it. Honour should be given where honour is due, as the apostle saith. Some indeed think that his fiscalship is, himself, infidel to the back-bone, and only wears the mask of christianity in order the more easily and profitably to do it mischief, if so, again he may be likened to Cawdor's Thane, who wished

Stars to hide their fires,

That no light might see his dark and deep desires.

But I do not quite believe many things I hear, and this is one of the number. It is, nevertheless, positively staggering, when one reflects, that the most sagacious of anti-christians could not by possibility hit upon any means better calculated to spread a knowledge of infidel opinions, and cover christianity with contempt, than those lately adopted in this city by that most useful of public functionaries. When a certain statesman (Pitt, I believe) boasted most eloquently in parliament, that his five millions in the shape of sinking-fund would, *in time*, pay off the whole national debt, Mr. Paine sarcastically compared the proposition, to a man with a wooden leg,



running after a hare, who, it may be guessed, runs to little purpose, seeing that the longer he runs, the farther he is behind. Such, or something such, is very likely to be the upshot of his fiscalship's chase after the infidels, who will not have the least occasion to *double*, in order to keep him at most respectful distance. But though my sympathy for him is literally exuding through my skin, and my desire is to crack him up as the best damager of christianity that Scotland has seen for centuries past, I must let the will go for the deed, and pass on to other matters of even greater importance—one of which is the defence of Robinson, by Mr. Alexander McNeil, who ranks among the ablest barristers of Scotland—and what is of equal importance, *likes the case exceedingly*. He thinks Robinson may be brought off with every stitch of his infidel colours flying. If so, persecution, or prosecution, for blasphemy, may "kick the bucket," in Scotland, that is, in more genteel phrase, give up the ghost. One, *only* one clear defeat will thoroughly sicken the persecution-mongers, and establish individual right to vend, publish, or circulate, any opinion works whatever. The unfortunate state of Robinson's health, rendered the assistance of counsel in his case absolutely necessary. Had a defence been prepared by or for him, such is the shattered state of his system, that even the exertion of reading it would have been too much for him. Under such circumstances, therefore, the assistance of counsel is indispensable, and as Mr. Alexander McNeil is a senior counsel, with a reputation quite equal to any other member of the Scottish bar, an efficient defence may be reckoned upon. Finlay, on the other hand, will read his defence, which measures have been taken to *print* as well as *prepare*, so that it will be ready for the public almost as soon as delivered in the court. He is a fine, spirited old fellow, and I doubt not will defend himself in a style to which the big-wigs of Edinburgh's court of justiciary are quite unaccustomed. I have been gratified by a peep at his defence, and am certainly of opinion that the like of it has never yet been heard within the walls of a Scotch court. By *permission*, I hereby give a few paragraphs therefrom, just sufficient to indicate its tone and character :

"Having set myself right with respect to the terms of this indictment, I will now briefly consider, or rather *repudiate*, certain opinions therein set forth, lest it should be supposed by your lordship and the jury, that I agree in *all* particulars with those writers whose books I have been accustomed to sell. In taking this course, I am not, however, actuated by any desire to escape the consequences fairly attaching to my conduct—far be that from me. No, my lord, and gentlemen of the jury, it is that the public may be put in possession of the whole truth, as regards myself, and *not* to escape any consequences strictly legal, that I make the following statement :

"In the case of the Queen *versus* Hetherington, tried in the Court of Queen's Bench, December 8th, 1840, before Lord Denman and a Middlesex special jury, his lordship, in summing up, observed, that the law considered the vendor of a work the publisher of it, and that, consequently, he must be held responsible. Now, against such high legal authority I have no wish to protest—for though it often happens that the vendors of works (as in my own case) have not time to examine all those which pass through their hands, when it seems hard to hold them responsible for every word they contain, yet, knowing the law to be as Lord Denman laid it down, in the case referred to, I bow thereto, without a murmur, but at the same time feel bound to say, that many of the printed works taken from my shop by the procurator fiscal, contain sentiments of which I heartily disapprove. As, for example, that famous book "The Age of Reason," which is an anti-christian work, whose principles I do not

approve, and whose general features I do not admire. Now, the indictment contains several passages from that work, one of which I will repeat, simply in order to enter my protest against it :

"As to the christian system of faith, it appears to me a species of atheism—a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of *manism*, with but little *deism*, and is as near to *atheism* as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his creator an opaque body, which it calls a redeemer—as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and the sun, and it produces, by this means, a religious, or irreligious eclipse of light. It has thrown the whole orbit of reason into the shade."

"Now, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, though I have pleaded guilty to vending the book, which contains this passage, I no less heartily condemn it than you do. Indeed, I am distinctly of opinion, that though Mr. Paine was the very first political writer of his age, his theological works are full of puerilities, and contain a vast deal of laboured argumentation that is absolutely beneath contempt. The quotation just given from my indictment, is certainly as contemptible a piece of reasoning as I ever remember to have read. The man who can honestly declare that christianity appears to him a species of atheism—a sort of religious denial of God, must surely be diseased in his wits, or, at all events, totally ignorant both of atheism and christianity; for the principles of atheism are no more like the principles of christianity than light is like darkness, or an elephant is like a sparrow. If Paine had understood atheism, he never would have committed himself with posterity by writing about a denial of God, religious or irreligious, seeing that those who call themselves atheists say it is sheer folly to deny God, until affirmers of God say what the word God means. The learned Daniel Wytenbach, in a prefatory note to Plutarch's Treatise on Superstition,\* says, 'The word atheist may easily be defined, as its derivation shows it to mean "one who supposes that there is no God," but (he adds), this definition cannot be understood till we declare what we mean by God.'

"Such, my lord and gentlemen, is my opinion, and, therefore, I cannot consistently agree with Paine that atheism is a sort of religious or irreligious denial of God; nor do I see how the christian system of faith can be fairly interpreted as a species of atheism, for upon the belief in one God, made up in some (to me) mysterious manner of *three persons*, the whole superstructure of doctrinal, and dogmatical, christianity rests.

"Again, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, what can be less reasonable than to associate (as Paine did in the above quoted passage) the ideas of atheism and creation, when, in point of fact, every atheist, properly so called, rejects the idea of creation as a mere whimsy of morbidly excited brains, and not what Paine seemed to think it, namely, an established truth; but Paine was a deist, and deism is the veriest folly that ever put in a claim to the character of philosophy.

"Such, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, is the conclusion at which I have arrived with respect to this peculiar passage—a conclusion, I may add, based upon the very able anti-deistical reasonings of the Bishop of Llandaff, and other eminent christian divines.

"This statement will, I trust, acquit me of entertaining opinions in common with the *whole* of those her majesty's advocate has made the basis of his indictment; but, in candour, I should distinctly state, that some of those opinions, are (so to

\* Published complete in the *Library of Reason*, for one penny,—Hetherington.

speak) literal transcripts of my own. When Paine *twaiddles* about christianity being a compound made up chiefly of *manism*, &c., I no more sympathise with him than I do with the wildest religious fanatics who cross my path; but when he declares that all national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, christian, or Turkish, are no more than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolise power and profit, I at once acknowledge its truth—I cannot do otherwise. The strength of my disbelief in the efficacy or divinity of any religious institution, has been in the direct ratio of my advancement as respects a knowledge of religion's origin, nature, and influence. This may be offensive to many now present; but I *know* it to be truth, and it is not so much to please and tickle the ears of others, as to satisfy my own conscience, that I venture to speak thus freely. And, why should the humblest individual, either within or without a court of justice, be blamed for sincerity? why should we, under any circumstances, be tempted to play the hypocrite's base part? and why, oh, why, should sincere christians desire to make any of their fellow-creatures hypocrites, or fear that the religion they believe divine can be injured by candid and manly opposition? If their religion is built upon a rock, of which truths are the component parts, the gates of hell, that is falsehood, will never prevail against it. But my presence here to-day is demonstrative evidence, that those who placed me here, if believers in the truth and moral beauty of the christian system, are men of little faith in that system's capability to withstand the shock of argument, or to pass through the fiery ordeal of reason. He, who they acknowledge as the author of their religion, taught (if the gospel err not) his followers to judge *not*, lest they should be judged—to refrain from wielding the sword, lest they should perish by the sword—and to spread abroad that truth, which he promised should 'set men free.' But history proves that they *have* judged, and most unjustly too; that they *have* used the sword with a mercilessness which has no parallel in ancient times, and instead of encouraging the freest expression of opinion, as the *necessary* preliminary to the appreciation and establishment of truth, they have hunted to destruction, or laboured to do so, all who have had honesty enough to dissent from those opinions, creeds, and preposterous dogmas they thought proper to prove true, as well as preserve the character of, *by act of parliament*. If such conduct as this is grossly and disgracefully inconsistent in catholic christians, what words can express its infamy when practised by protestant christians?—by those who, while maintaining for *themselves* the right to be schismatic and latitudinarian, torture and grievously oppress others whose only crime consists in having followed their example. The catholics protested against the pagans; the protestants, in turn, protested against the catholics; then followed presbyterian and other dissenters, who protested against protestants; and why, in the name of justice, consistency, and common sense, should any individual be denied the liberty to protest against them all? Is it not intolerable as disgraceful, that in a country like this, where the battle for intellectual freedom has been so often and nobly fought, any individual should be liable to cruel punishment, for publishing his own opinions, or the opinions of others, if those opinions clash with the conceits, whimsies, and miserable prejudices of religionists?"

This must suffice. I would gladly quote a few more extracts from this "tarnation" spicy defence, that *is to be* delivered by Thomas Finlay, in Scotland's high court of justiciary, on Monday, the 24th inst., but will, for many reasons, forego that pleasure. One is, that the defence will be on sale, at all liberal booksellers, within a week after the trial, and as it may be had for sixpence, I presume that every reader of the INVE-

TIGATOR will take one at least, especially when it is understood that *all profits derived from its sale will be used for the benefit of Finlay's wife and family*. The matter of it is expected to closely pack thirty-two pages of royal octavo, with clear, but small, type. All who are friendly to the good cause should aid in its circulation. Nothing galls the enemies of freedom so much as to see pamphlets of this "defence"-kind scattered among the "vulgar." If the irreligious party in this nation had a complete command of the press, it would be weak no longer. Now the press can only be had by paying for it, in other words, publishers will not publish unless they can profit by publishing. Mills are of no use unless grist be brought to them, and though buying, selling, and living by the loss may be talked about, it is not safe practice, I believe. These hints are thrown out for the advantage of those ardent lovers of liberty who will do anything but pay for it, either in purse or person. It is principally by the press and through the press that our intellectuals are to be purged of their errors. Hitherto, that most potent of all human instruments has been oftener and better wielded by freedom's foes than freedom's friends. The truth is, that the party in Europe known as the infidel, has made itself *felt*, but not *feared*, by its enemies. That party has done *much*, not, however, *enough*. I hope speedily to see it assume a bold and imposing attitude; an attitude that shall ensure the respect even of its most determined opponents. It is related of Peter the Great, that upon observing the quenchless disposition for fighting displayed by his rash antagonist, Charles the Twelfth, he exclaimed, "*This Swede will teach us how to beat him.*" The infidels have abundant reason to say the same thing to their christian combaters, for so bent are the latter on fighting, that ere long they will infallibly teach us how to give them a thorough trouncing.

Everything indicates a change for the better in infidel tactics, and a change for the worse in the tactics of their opponents. The army of Christ, that church militant for which so many prayers are said, and so much money expended, is sadly disorganised. It is made up of regiments that forcibly remind one of the ragged troop with whom Sir John Falstaff flatly refused to march through Coventry. Now then is the time for the enemies of that church to make a decisive movement. Scotland is almost ripe for a revolution of ideas and systems. In all parts of it the spirit of irreligion is manifesting itself. Verily, the christian priests, north as well as south of Tweed, should take Lord Grey's advice, and "set their houses in order."

A few weeks since, the subjoined letter appeared in the "Montrose, Arbroath, and Brechin Reviewer:"

#### TO THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL IN ARBROATH.

##### *Socialism and Infidelity.*

Rev. Sirs.—It can be no secret to you that infidelity is stalking over the length and breadth of the land with giant strides. Our own town has of late been visited by a moral pestilence. That there is neither moral good nor evil, has been broadly asserted, and has as proudly challenged denial. The lecture-room has been crowded to hear the monstrous dogma defended. And can it for a moment be doubted that many of our youth have lent a willing ear to the sophistry used in its defence, and so have been caught in the net which was spread to catch them? Nor has the lecture-room alone been made the only source from which the moral poison has emanated. An atheistical club has been formed, for the pretended purpose of enlightening its members on the so-reckoned absurdities of revelation. Its meetings, I am told, are held once a-week; and at each meeting the scoff and the



jeer at every thing sacred is held as most consummate wit. The members of this club can give their countenance to socialist lecturers; they can also lend their influence to draw their acquaintances into the mighty whirlpool of atheism. I know that attempts have been made to poison the minds of the young and unwary, by lending them infidel books and pamphlets; the reading of which has been followed up with the taunt, that none but ignorant fools would reject truths so palpable as those advocated in their books; and that all christians are but the dupes of designing knaves. This, you know, has a most seductive influence on the inexperienced mind. Because of the natural aversion which it has to revealed truth, it is first wished that what they have read and been told were true; the wish grows fast; and I may say, with truth, that they literally wish themselves into the belief of the most soul-destroying, man-debasing doctrines the world ever saw. Consider farther, gentlemen, that each of those who have thus become infidel, become, in their turns, the nucleus—the source—of a great deal more of moral pollution. Consider that when they are employed at their various occupations in the workshop, even there they are diffusing the moral poison; and thus operate on the young and unguarded in the same manner as they themselves have been operated upon. Thus, you will easily see that, if allowed to go on unchecked in their career, their doctrines must spread, not in arithmetical, but in geometrical, progression.

This is no fanciful picture. It is true to the life; and many a working-man in Arbroath can testify to the truth of what I have said. Therefore, let me entreat you to do something out of the ordinary course of your ministerial duties—to attempt, at least, to stem the downward current of irreligion, which now threatens to inundate us like a mighty flood. What I mean to propose to you for your consideration is, that you should commence a course of lectures on the evidences of christianity. This is common ground, on which men of all denominations can meet, and strenuously unite in its defence; and I am fully persuaded that a great deal of good would be done, if this were carried into effect. The gainsayer might be convinced, and the doubtful confirmed. It would, moreover, strengthen the hands of those who have no doubt at all on the subject; it would fill their mouths with arguments; and so enable them to show to their opponents that they are not following “cunningly-devised fables.”

Let it not be supposed that there is no more necessity for your adopting this course at present than at any other time. I have all my life mixed with the common working people. I am one of themselves; and I never knew their minds so unsettled upon these subjects as at present. But although their minds were not unsettled, I maintain that your adopting such a course is necessary. I am quite well aware that there is an abundant store of evidence to be found in books, to which a vast may easily have access by means of libraries; and that they could thus satisfy their minds by taking advantage of the means thus afforded them. But I need not tell you that there are many who will not take the trouble to read books on the subject, who would most willingly attend a course of lectures, if these were once begun.

Let me, therefore, entreat you to adopt the course which I have pointed out to you, or any other which may appear to you to be better adapted for strengthening the faith of christians, and putting the unwary on their guard. I have not adopted the resolution of addressing this letter to you, merely because I thought society in this quarter stood in need of such treatment, but because many of my acquaintances, after mature consideration, have assured me that they were also convinced of its necessity. A WORKING MAN.

Arbroath, May 31, 1843.

This, it must be confessed, looks like business. It is quite evident that the Scottish curers of souls, will have their hands full presently. The formation of atheistical clubs in such a country as Scotland, is an ominous sign of the times. To what are things tending? is the question asked on every side, but few seem satisfied either with their own or anybody else's answers. This “working man” seems to think that if some vigorous measures be not instantly taken to check

infidelism in Arbroath, that anti-christian doctrines “Will go on unchecked in their career, and spread, not in arithmetical, but in geometrical, progression.” Pray heaven he prove not a false alarmist! It is not, however, impossible, or even improbable that this “working man” is a sheep in wolf's clothing, who wants to frighten the parsons, and call particular attention to the Arbroath atheistical club, for purposes far from orthodox. But be he infidel sheep or christian wolf, what he states is not only true in relation to Arbroath, but many other localities in the very heart of Scotland. With respect to my own doings, I will say little, because they have as yet been but little. On Sunday morning I delivered my first lecture to a Scottish audience, and in the evening a second lecture. The audiences were attentive, and on both occasions numerous, indeed, I may say, crowded—the evening assemblage unpleasantly so, many persons retiring in consequence of the pressure and heat, which latter, by the way, was of that stifling, oppressive kind, as to seriously affect me. The want of a good hall is much felt by the socialists here. The room they have is not half large enough for present, to say nothing of future, purposes. Besides its smallness, it has the fault of being one of the worst ventilated of the many ill-ventilated rooms it has been my fortune to speak in. The members are perfectly sensible how great a drawback this is upon their exertions, but the difficulties which at present lie in the way of either raising such a hall as they have in contemplation, or hiring a room better in all respects than the one they have, are very great, and will not vanish till the rich friends of individual improvement and co-operation on the universality principle, are as munificent in action as in good wishes. On Monday night, the members held a soiree, in honour of my arrival, in other words, to testify their pleasure at finding me amongst them. The whole affair was managed very well. Charges for admission were sixpence and ninepence—ninepence for males, and sixpence for females. Tea was admirably arranged, on tables constructed for the purpose, upon the same principle that, when a boy, I have often built up my card-castles. The tables, of course, were infinitely stronger than my castles, or they would hardly have stood stiffer than buckram, beneath their delicious load of cake, coffee, tea, &c. Mr. Harthill presided—a young man of energetic and amiable character, who has the rare talent to unite in his favour the suffrages of all parties. My old friend, the promising young Jeffery, was present, having journeyed from Glasgow for that purpose, and delivered a speech of great power, which was well calculated to excite the sluggish and strengthen the active. He has much improved in all respects since I last heard him in London—which tells well for the air, food, society, and last (certainly not least), the “bonnie lassies” of Scotland. Of my speech upon that happy occasion, modesty forbids me to report favourably, and as to anything unfavourable, I leave that to be reported by others. Dancing followed close upon the speech-making, and was indulged in by the never weary trippers upon “light fantastic toes,” till a late, or rather early, hour. Thus must end this, my second bulletin, for though friend Robinson has just handed me a copy of his indictment, and I am extremely envious to commence my promised dissection of its contents, the tedious length to which my bulletin has already reached, precludes me from doing so. By way, however, of apology, for not having kept my word in that particular, I will merely observe, that not until nearly the whole of the foregoing was written, could I succeed in getting a copy of the indictment referred to. Next week, however (God willing) I will give its framers such a dressing as they will infallibly remember so long as memory “holds its seat in their distracted brains.”

C. SOUTHWELL.

## PHILOSOPHICAL DIGESTS.

## IV.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KANT.

MADAME DE STAEL observes, in her celebrated work on Germany,\* that at the period when Kant's chief work, "The Critique of Pure Reason," appeared, "There existed among men only two systems concerning the human understanding; the one, that of Locke, ascribed all our ideas to sensations; the other, that of Descartes and of Leibnitz, had for its chief objects to demonstrate the spirituality and activity of the soul, the freedom of the will, and, in short, the whole doctrine of the idealists. . . . Between these extremes reason continued to wander, till Kant undertook to trace the limits of the two empires—of the senses, and of the soul, of the external, and of the internal, worlds. The force of meditation and of sagacity with which he marked their limits, had not, perhaps, any example among his predecessors." In another part of the same work, the Critique of Pure Reason is announced as having "given the impulse to all that has been since done in Germany, both in literature and in philosophy."

In a book thus lauded by a writer of such great ability, as Madame de Stael unquestionably was, one might naturally expect to meet with a solution of all metaphysical problems, or, at all events, a clearly delineated metaphysical system. Indeed, it was this decided judgment on Kant, and what is generally allowed to be his *masterpiece*, that first led me to investigate the principles therein laid down, with a view to determine for myself whether its author had any legitimate claim to praises so extraordinary.

The persons most likely to understand either principles or systems are evidently those who patiently examine them. In this way I laboured to get at a knowledge of the principles and system the Critique of Pure Reason was written to establish the truth of. But a copy of that singular work did not fall in my way until after I had consulted some of its author's ablest commentators, who certainly rather stimulated than repressed my curiosity, and convinced me, that though Madame de Stael may have exaggerated the merits of the Critique of Pure Reason, she had not overrated its importance. The learned Mr. John Schulze, for example, author of "The Synopsis of the Critical Philosophy," a work translated, I believe, by Dr. Willich, and copied into his "Elementary View of Kant's Works"—in pages 42 and 43 of that synopsis the aim of Kant's Critique is stated as no less than "To lead reason to the true knowledge of itself—to examine the titles upon which it founds the supposed possession of its metaphysical knowledge, and by means of this examination, to mark the true limits beyond which it cannot venture to speculate, without wandering into the region of pure fancy."

This, it must be confessed, was attempting a work of no ordinary difficulty and importance. Had Kant succeeded in marking the true limits "Beyond which men cannot venture to speculate, without wandering into the empty region of pure fancy," he would have conferred benefits lasting as inestimable upon philosophy, and fairly earned the reputation of being the world's greatest metaphysician. But, alas! the Kantian system, though ushered into existence with a pompous species of pretension that dazzled the eyes and fascinated the judgment of many, has long been consigned to that oblivious grave in which so many spurious philosophies lie buried. As the splendid apostate, Edmund Burke, was said to have

done, so *did* the Kantian philosophy, namely, "rise like a rocket, and fall like its stick." Professor Stewart, in a note to section vii. of his "Preliminary Dissertation," prefixed to the "Encyclopedia Britannica," thus bears testimony to the pretensional spirit with which Kantists introduced the metaphysical system of their master, and the rapidity with which it crumbled into nothingness. "My ignorance of German (says he) would have prevented me from saying anything of the philosophy of Kant, if the extraordinary pretensions with which it was first brought forward in this island, contrasted with the entire neglect into which it soon afterwards suddenly fell, had not seemed to demand some attention to so wonderful a phenomenon in the literary history of the eighteenth century." I need add nothing to this in order to convince sensible people that the examination of a philosophy whose character is so peculiar, and fate so singular, can neither be uninteresting or unprofitable.

Though Kant has a reputation *tout à fait* heterodox, if his own explicit declaration may be relied on, his Critique of Pure Reason was intended as a *finisher* to all *extreme* philosophical, or rather, unphilosophical, opinions. The path between irrational religion and equally irrational scepticism was there intended to be so accurately, as well as distinctly, traced, that its author flattered himself that in a short time none other would be travelled by any parties with the slightest claim to philosophical character. In the Pref. Posterior, p. 35, to his "Philosophia Critica," are these words; "Hac igitur sola et materialismi, et fatalismi, et atheismi, et diffidentiae profanae, et fanaticismi, et superstitionis quorum virus ad universos potest penetrare, tandemque etiam ad idealismi et scepticismi, qui magis scholis sunt pestiferi, radices ipsae possunt praecidi," which seems to indicate that he was much disposed to make terrible havoc with atheism as well as superstition. It is a fact worthy of notice, that it was the atheistical Hume's famous "Theory of Causation," which gave his thoughts the direction peculiar to them, and stimulated him to the task of proving that there is a free reason independent of all experience and sensation, the principle upon which, according to Schulze, "the whole Critique of Pure Reason is established."

In the preface to one of his treatises, entitled "Prolegomena ad Metaphysicam quamque futuram quae quae Scientia poterit prodire," Kant furnishes the following statement of his reasons for attempting the reform, or rather the entire and complete reconstruction, of metaphysical philosophy:

"Since the essays of Locke and of Leibnitz, or, rather, since the origin of metaphysics, as far as their history extends, no circumstance has occurred which might have been more decisive of the fate of this science than the attack made upon it by David Hume. He proceeded upon a single but important idea in metaphysics, the connection of cause and effect, and the concomitant notions of power and action. He challenged reason to answer him what title she had to imagine, that anything may be so constituted, as, that if it be given, something else is also thereby inferred; for the idea of cause denotes this. He proved beyond contradiction, that it is impossible for reason to think of such a connection *a priori*, for it contains necessity, but it is not possible to perceive how because something is, something else must necessarily be; nor how the idea of such a connection can be introduced *a priori*.

Hence, he concluded that reason entirely deceives herself with this idea, and that she erroneously considers it as her own child, when it is only the spurious offspring of imagination impregnated by experience; a subjective necessity, arising from habit and the association of ideas, being thus substituted for an objective one derived from perception. . . . . However hasty and unwarrantable Hume's conclusion might appear, yet it was founded upon investigation; and this investigation well deserved that some of the philosophers of his time should have united to solve, more happily if possible, the problem in the sense in which he delivered it. A complete reform of the science might have resulted from this solution. But is a mortifying reflection, that his opponents,

\* See the "Allemagne," vol. 3, pages 70-73.



Reid, Beattie, Oswald, and, lastly, Priestly himself, totally misunderstood the tendency of his problem. The question was not, whether the idea of cause be in itself proper and indispensable to the illustration of all natural knowledge, for this Hume had never doubted; but whether this idea be an object of thought, through reasoning *a priori*, and whether, in this manner, it possesses internal evidence, independently of all experience; consequently, whether its utility be not limited to objects of sense alone. It was on this point that Hume expected an explanation.

I freely own it was these suggestions of Hume's which first, many years ago, roused me from my dogmatical slumber, and gave to my inquiries quite a different direction in the field of speculative philosophy. I was far from being carried away by his conclusions, the fallacy of which chiefly arose from his not forming to himself an idea of the whole of his problem, but merely investigating a part of it, the solution of which was impossible, without a comprehensive view of the whole. When we proceed on a well-founded, though not thoroughly-digested thought, we may expect, by patient and continued reflection, to prosecute it farther than the acute genius had done to whom we are indebted for the first spark of this light. I first inquired, therefore, whether Hume's objection might not be a general one, and soon found that the idea of cause and effect is far from being the only one by which the understanding *a priori* thinks of the connection of things; but rather that the science of metaphysics is altogether founded upon these connections. I endeavoured to ascertain their number; and having succeeded in this attempt, I proceeded to the examination of those general ideas, which, I was now convinced, are not derived from experience, but arise out of the pure understanding. This deduction, which seemed impossible to my acute predecessor, and which nobody besides him had ever conceived, though every one makes use of these ideas without asking upon what their objective validity is founded; this deduction, I say, was the most difficult that could have been undertaken for the behoof of metaphysics, and what was still more embarrassing, metaphysics could not here offer me the slightest assistance, because that deduction ought first to establish the possibility of a system of metaphysics. As I had now succeeded in the explanation of Hume's problem, not merely in a particular instance, but with a view of the whole power of pure reason, I could advance with sure, though tedious, steps, to determine upon, completely, and upon general principles, the compass of Pure Reason—both what is the sphere of its exertion, and what are its limits; which was all that was required for erecting a system of metaphysics, upon a proper and solid foundation."

Professor Stewart thought that there is nothing in the foregoing passage on which Kant could found any just claim to originality. "A variety of English writers (he observes, in his very useful dissertation before referred to) had long before this work (*The Critique of Pure Reason*) appeared, replied to Mr. Hume, by observing that the understanding is itself a source of new ideas, and that it is from this source that our notions of cause and effect are derived. 'Our certainty (says Dr. Price) that every new event requires some cause, depends no more on experience, than our certainty of any other the most obvious subject of intuition. In the idea of every *change*, is included that of its being an *effect*.' In the works of Dr. Reid, many remarks of the same nature are to be found—but instead of quoting any of these, I shall produce a passage from a much older author, whose mode of thinking and writing may, perhaps, be more agreeable to the taste of Kant's countrymen, than the simplicity and precision aimed at by the disciples of Locke.

"That there are some ideas of the mind (says Dr. Cudworth) which were not stamped or impressed upon it from the sensible objects without, and therefore must needs arise from the innate vigour and activity of the mind itself, is evident, in that there are, first, ideas of such things as are neither affections of bodies, nor could be imprinted or conveyed by any local motions, nor can be pictured at all by the fancy in any sensible colours—such as are the ideas of

wisdom, folly, prudence, knowledge, ignorance, verity, falsity, virtue, vice, honesty, dishonesty, justice, injustice, volition, cogitation, nay, of itself, which is a species of cogitation, and which is not perceptible by any other sense; and many other such like notions as include something of cogitation in them, or refer to cogitative beings only—which ideas must needs spring from the active power, and innate fecundity of the mind itself, because the corporeal objects of sense can imprint no such thing upon it. Secondly, in that there are many relative notions and ideas attributed as well to corporeal as incorporeal things, that proceed wholly from the activity of the mind comparing one thing with another. Such as are *cause, effect, means, end, order, proportion, similitude, dissimilitude, equality, inequality, aptitude, inaptitude, symmetry, assymetry, whole and part, genus and species, and the like.*"

This extract from Cudworth, even though it stand alone, certainly goes far to justify the assertion of Professor Stewart, that there is nothing in the Critique of Pure Reason which can fairly lay claim to the slightest originality. A certain kind of originality he *does*, however, allow Kant to have displayed, as he says in a note, that in "The attempt, indeed, which Kant has made to enumerate all the general ideas which are not derived from experience, but arise out of the pure understanding, he may well lay claim to the praise of originality."

The "attempt" to which Professor Stewart here awards the praise of originality, is explained by Mr. Schulze, in his "Synopsis of the Critical Philosophy," as an attempt "To investigate the whole store of original notions discoverable in our understanding, and which lie at the foundation of all our knowledge, and at the same time to authenticate their true descent, by showing that they are not derived from experience, but are pure productions of the understanding:

"1. The perception of objects contain, indeed, the matter of knowledge, but are in themselves blind and dead, and not knowledge—and our soul is merely passive with regard to them.

"2. If these perceptions are to furnish knowledge, the understanding must think of them, and this is possible only through notions (conceptions), which are the peculiar form of our understanding—in the same manner as space and time are the form of our sensitive faculty.

"3. These notions are active representations of our understanding faculty—and as they regard immediately the perceptions of objects, they refer to the objects themselves only mediately.

"4. They lie in our understanding as pure notions *a priori*, at the foundation of all our knowledge. They are necessary forms, radical notions (predicaments) of which all our knowledge of them must be compounded. And the table of them follows:

- "Quantity, unity, plurality, totality.
- "Quality, reality, negation, limitation.
- "Relation, substance, cause, reciprocation.
- "Modality, possibility, existence, necessity.

"Now, to think and to judge is the same thing—consequently, every notion contains a particular form of judgment concerning objects. There are *four* principal genera of judgments. They are derived from the above four possible functions of the understanding, each of which contains under it *three species*, namely, with respect to

"Quantity—They are universal, particular, singular judgments.

"Quality—They are affirmative, negative, infinite judgments.

"Relation—They are categorical, hypothetical, disjunctive judgments.

"Modality"—They are problematical, assertory, apodictical judgments."

Kant's arguments on the *will* are expressed with a caution amounting to cowardice. Notwithstanding, however, this excess of caution, arising from his fear of being ranked among necessitarians, those arguments, even though their validity or conclusiveness be admitted, only establish the *possibility* of a *free-will*. The contrast between Kant and Diderot, as regards the respective modes in which they handled the free-will versus necessity question is very striking, and certainly favourable to the latter. Diderot, in common with all "proper atheists," was a *necessitarian*—which fact reminds me of a pernicious fiction, which certain deistical writers have been so anxious to impose upon the world. Astonishing as it may appear, they have declared that libertarians, or those who hold the doctrine of a free human will, are favourers of atheism! The able Collins, to wit, who, in the celebrated pamphlet wherein he sought to prove "the impossibility of liberty," says, "If anything can have a beginning, which has no cause, then nothing can produce something. And if nothing can produce something, then the world might have had a beginning without a cause; which is an absurdity not only charged on atheists, but is a real absurdity in itself. . . . Liberty, therefore, or a power to act or not to act, to do this or another thing under the same causes, is an impossibility, and *atheistical*."

Now, in answer to this slanderous paragraph, it will be sufficient for me to state, first, that though the notion of nothing producing something has certainly been "charged on atheists," they have, at least a thousand times over, rebutted that charge—and as to the doctrine of liberty, it is at utter variance with the fundamental propositions on which atheism reposes. There have been atheists, without doubt, who were libertarians in the *deceitful* sense expressed by Abbé Galiani: "Man is free, since he is so fully persuaded he is so, and that is worth almost as much as liberty itself. Behold, then, the mechanism of the universe made clear as water from the rock. The conviction of being free, constitutes the essence of man. He may be defined as *an animal who believes himself free*—and that would be a definition quite complete."\* This is precisely the sense in which Kant thought, or rather did *not* think, man has a free-will—for, as Professor Stewart observed, his idea was that every being who *conceives* itself to be free, whether it be in reality so or not, is rendered, by its own belief, a moral and accountable agent—an opinion that "proper atheists" might consistently enough fall in with—but their philosophy is altogether repugnant to any other free-will, than so purely imaginary a one. As, however, it is the plan of this Digest to bring within view of the reader *all* the more prominent features of Kant's philosophy, before critically examining *any one* of those features, I will not *now* discuss the free will versus necessity question, but merely call attention to the fact, that those who have written most ably on the Kantian philosophy are loud in their praises of the skilful manner in which its author established the *possibility* of free-will. F. A. Nitsch, in his "General and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles—Concerning Man, the World, and the Deity," tells us:

"Professor Kant is decidedly of opinion, that although many strong and ingenious arguments have been brought forward in favour of the freedom of the will, they are yet far

urged by the necessitarians, but by an appeal to mere feeling, which, on such a question, is of no avail. For this purpose, to call to our assistance the principles of Kant, who, in treating this subject, begins with showing that the notion of a *free will* is not *contradictory*. In proof of this he observes, that, from being decisive. Nor have they refuted the arguments although every human action, as an event in time, must have a cause, and so on *ad infinitum*; yet it is certain that the laws of cause and effect can have a place there only where *time* is, for the effect must be consequent on the cause. But neither *time* nor *space* are properties of things; they are only the general *forms* under which man is allowed to view himself and the world. It follows, therefore, that man is not in time nor in space, although the forms of his intuitive ideas are time and space. But if man exist not in time and space, he is not influenced by the laws of time and space, among which those of cause and effect hold a distinguished rank; it is therefore no contradiction to conceive that, in such, an order of things may be free.

Such is Nitsch's account of the skilful mode in which Kant untwisted this knotty question—but though satisfactory enough to kantians and necessitarians, too, free-willers don't admire such skilfulness. They don't fancy so practical a giving up of their darling fallacy. Professor Stewart belonged to this discontented section of metaphysicians, and desirous though he uniformly was to press all available arguments into the service of free-willers, was constrained to admit "The first impression which Kant's argument produces upon the mind, is that his own opinion was *favourable* to the *scheme of necessity*. For, if the reasonings of the necessitarians be admitted to be satisfactory, and if nothing can be opposed to them but the incomprehensible proposition that *man neither exists in time nor in space*, the natural inference is, that this proposition was brought forward rather to *save appearances* than as a serious objection to the universality of the conclusion."

But though Mr. Stewart was by no means satisfied with Kant's skilful treatment of the liberty versus necessity doctrine, or with his arguments in *favour* of the existence of a Deity, which, indeed, are of precisely similar stamp to those urged in behalf of a *free human will*, he nevertheless did not think it was Kant's aim to establish a system of scepticism, but thought it probable that Kant "Began with a serious wish to refute the doctrines of Hume, but discovered in the progress of his inquiries obstacles he had not calculated upon, and that it was to remove these obstacles he had recourse to practical reason—an idea (says Mr. Stewart) which has every appearance of being an after-thought, very remote from his views when he first undertook his work."

M. Reinhold, whose great ability as a commentator, and intimate knowledge of Kant's philosophy, ensure respect for his criticisms, assures us that "Practical reason is a wing which Kant has prudently added to his edifice, from a sense of the inadequacy of the original design to answer the intended purpose." It bears a manifest resemblance to what some philosophers call an appeal to *sentiment*, founding belief on the necessity of acting. Whatever contempt Kant may affect for popular systems of philosophy, this manner of considering the subject is not unlike the disposition of those who, feeling their inability to obtain, by the exercise of their reason, a direct conviction of their religious creed, cling to it, nevertheless, with a blind eagerness, as a support essential to their morals and happiness.

"The system of Kant (he observes in another place) was well adapted to flatter the weaknesses of the human mind. Curiosity was excited by seeing paths opened which had never been trodden before. The love of mystery found a secret charm in the obscurity which enveloped the doctrine. The long and troublesome period of initiation was calculated to rouse the ambition of bold and adventurous spirits. Their

\* L'homme, est donc libre, puisqu'il est intimement persuadé d'être, et que cela vaut tout au tant que la liberté. Voilà donc le mécanisme de l'univers expliqué clair comme de l'eau de roche. La persuasion de liberté constitue l'essence de l'homme. On pourrait même définir l'homme un animal qui se croit libre, et ce serait une définition complète." (Tome I., Correspondence de L'Abbé Galiani, pp. 339, 340).



love of singularity was gratified by the new nomenclature, while their vanity exulted in the idea of being admitted into a privileged sect, exercising, and entitled to exercise, the supreme censorship in philosophy. Even men of the most ordinary parts, on finding themselves called to functions so high, lost sight of their real mediocrity, and conceived themselves transformed into geniuses destined to form a new era in the history of reason.

"Another inevitable effect, resulted from the universal change operated by Kant in his methods, and in the enunciation of his problems. The intellectual powers of the greater part of the initiated were too much exhausted in the course of their long novitiate to be qualified to judge soundly of the doctrine itself. They felt themselves, after so many windings, lost in a labyrinth, and were unable to dispense with the assistance of the guide who had conducted them so far. Others, after so great a sacrifice, wanted the courage to confess to the world, or to themselves, the disappointment they had met with. They attached themselves to the doctrine in proportion to the sacrifice they had made, and estimated its value by the labour it had cost them. As for more superficial thinkers, they drew an inference from the novelty of the form in favour of the novelty of the matter, and from the novelty of the matter in favour of its importance.

"It is a great advantage for a sect to possess a distinguishing garb and livery. It was thus that the peripatetics extended their empire so widely, and united their subjects in one common obedience. Kant had, over and above all this, the art of insisting that his disciples should belong exclusively to himself. He explicitly announced that he was not going to found a school of eclectics, but a school of his own, a school not only independent of, but in some measure hostile to, every other—that he could admit of no compromise with any sect whatever—that he was come to overturn everything which existed in philosophy, and to erect a new edifice on these immense ruins. The more decided and arrogant the terms were in which he announced the design, the more likely was it to succeed; for the human mind submits more easily to an unlimited, than to a partial, faith, and yields itself up without reserve, rather than consent to cavil about restrictions and conditions even in favour of its own independence."

(To be continued.)

## SOME CURIOUS OPINIONS,

DRAWN FROM THE WRITINGS OF DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS.

SOME of the ancient philosophers, having a vain ambition of getting eternal fame, by raising some particular sect of philosophy, which might generally take amongst men, set up for one of these ways—either to please the voluptuous who care for nothing but delighting their senses, without any further regard; or by pretending to futurity and eternity to make a more glorious noise, and thereby thought to prevail more powerfully and universally, as overawing the timorous, and alluring the ambitious; in which way they adapted eternal torments to evil doers, and everlasting glory to the virtuous. This, they not improbably hoped would make their sect to be admitted and cherished by princes, as commodious to government. Also, this latter sort, to compass their end, were necessitated to wrest their doctrines of the soul so far from mere illuminate nature, as one of the ancients said, they delivered things more like dreams, or old wives' tales, than truths; and, at length, posterity, following their ancestors, like carriers' horses in a track, without seeking out any new or

better way, they received such frenzies from one another, and improved them with such dotages of their own, as surpassed all poetic fictions, and instead of taking with the vulgar, grew ridiculous. For in truth they needed as much and as weak credulity, as ever any vulgar superstitions did; but were not so craftily fitted to draw vulgar capacities to honesty, or terrify them from vice, as other superstitions were. Their views of separate souls in eternal joys, or infernal agonies, Enumerus, the atheist, says, most impiously, were as hard to prove as the Elysian fields, Acheron, or Styx, or Pluto with all his infernal guard. All this would do little or no good upon the profane rabble, for they would say within themselves, if this be all we will not for such metaphysics forbear any manner of pleasure or profit, how base soever. On the other side, should you hear Mohamed assuring the people that if they would lead a pious, obedient, and religious life in this world, they should hereafter live for ever in most pleasant gardens, with a variety of delicious fruits, beautiful women, and high affections, with abilities renewed eternally; but if they led an irreligious life, and were disobedient unto his doctrine, they should hereafter be delivered up to horrid devils, who would for ever torment them in a lake of material fire and brimstone—this doctrine, when once, by education and the solemnity of public authority, implanted and upheld in the minds of men, proves far more prevalent with them, than the sublime notions of Plato, how well-grounded soever; and as to an exact proof before natural reason, clear and not prepossessioned, perhaps Plato would not have much the odds of Mohamed; nihil est infelicius homine cui sua signimenta dominantur.—Blount.

Yéhou, considered merely as one of those beings generically called Aleim, appears to have been only a national, or hereditary, deity; for Jephthah, one of the residents of the Hebrew republic, said to the king of the Ammonites, "Shalt thou not possess that which Chemosh, thy Aleim, hath made thee to possess? And shall we not possess all that, which Yéhou, our Aleim, hath made us to possess (or hath driven out from before us)?"—Hibbert.

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## PREVALENCE OF LIBERAL OPINIONS.

POWER is often made the rule of right by the oppressors of mankind. The armed and mighty monarch sometimes condescends to talk of divine and hereditary warrant to tyrannise over the sons of men; but his most potent argument is his physical amount of strength, and the number and devotion of his military adherents. Too often does it happen that the eyes of men are dazzled by the display of power; and the crimes of a successful leader are consecrated as virtues by the misjudging multitude. They "try the Cæsar or the Catiline by the true touchstone of desert—success," and bow down in meek submission to the authority of their fellow-man, merely because he has succeeded in oppressing others. Their minds, as well as their bodies, become enslaved, and the reign of despotism is thus extended and perpetuated.

It is so with religious domination—the priest, as well as the soldier, commands men to submit to the doctrines sanctioned by the belief of multitudes; and the prevalence of such belief is cited as a convincing argument of its truth. The despot, occasionally, is compelled to repress the rising spirit of freedom. Some patriot chieftains have always arisen, at intervals, calling on their countrymen to strike for liberty. That summons is rarely answered by the body of the people; and the few who battle with the tyrant and his slaves, are too often overborne by numbers, and perish in the unequal struggle. The oppressor rises up stronger from crushed rebellion, and imputes his victory to the favour of heaven. His hireling writers point to the issue of the contest as indicative of the divine will, and as demonstrating the futility of all attempts to free the nations.

So likewise argues the priest—the same yielding and uninquiring disposition which has made men slaves to kings, operates to bind them in the fetters of superstition; and because they have been so for ages, and will not be aroused, *en masse*, to vindicate their mental rights, therefore, says the priest, christianity cannot be overturned; and as it has continued to be regarded with reverence, heretofore, so will it be to the end of time. As he waxes zealous in the discussion, he anticipates, with holy confidence, the permanence of his craft, and exclaims, with an indignant disregard of fact and logic, "Have not all the efforts of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Gibbon, Hume, Paine, and other infidels, in their unholty warfare against the religion of Christ, been attended with failure? And if such powerful writers have attacked it in vain, is not this a proof of its indestructibility, as well as a warning to inferior antagonists that their opposition is fruitless?" The illogical conclusion, from assumed premises, is answered by the question, in the affirmative; and he proceeds, with great complacency, to advise all persons whatsoever to submit silently to the dominant creed.

Now, the assertion that the writings of the philosophers

alluded to have been unsuccessful, when directed against christianity, possesses about as much truth as the generality of statements made by churchmen. At the present day, the works of these authors are read, and their opinions are prevalent, in every part of christendom. No one can peruse a volume of modern travels on the continent of Europe, or pay the least attention to the facts developed in the numerous journals of Great Britain, without being convinced that such is the case. The most enlightened individuals in Portugal and Spain—those who attempted to introduce constitutional government into those countries, and failed, because of the ignorance and bigotry of the mass of the people—are known to have been liberal in their religious opinions, and to have been hated by the priesthood on that account.

Every one knows that, in France, the great majority of the young men—the new generation that has sprung up since the downfall of the republic—have imbibed the opinions of their illustrious encyclopedists, and view with loathing and contempt the efforts of the jesuits to bring back their country to the exploded belief of former ages. The order of jesuits in modern France may be compared to the presbyterians in our own country. The same officiousness in regard to the concerns of other people's souls, the same intolerance towards other modes of belief than their own, and the same engrossing desire to seize on the temporalities of this world, in furtherance of their *holy* designs, characterise both orders, and require unceasing vigilance on the part of the friends of freedom. It is gratifying to know that the enlightened portion of the French people—the physicians and advocates, more especially, and great numbers of the middle classes—are united in their opposition to the schemes of the jesuits, and prompt in defeating their iniquitous designs. No additional proof need be required of the true state of public sentiment in France, than the rapid sale of successive editions of the works of her philosophical writers; and it will be a difficult task to persuade us that the perusal of hundreds of thousands of copies of such works, does not indicate the prevalence of anti-christian sentiments, and insure the ultimate downfall of the fabric of superstition.

How stands the case in Germany? and what says the christian, when he closely marks the consequences of the undaunted spirit of inquiry which is springing up among this metaphysical people? Every one knows that a vast majority of the students at the German universities are emancipated from the thralldom of superstition; and it is easy to calculate their influence on the other parts of the community. But the most unpalatable fact of all, is, that the protestant *clergy*—ay, even the clergy—have eaten of the forbidden fruit of knowledge, and threaten to aid in demolishing the system which they are hired to defend. Some late publications, by German *divines*, on the authenticity of the bible, shed a flood of light upon the extent of their belief, and have struck deep terror among their more orthodox brethren in other countries.



The conductors of British religious journals do not hesitate to charge them with downright *atheism*! and hold up their holy hands in pious horror, as they expatiate on the enormity of the crime!

In the more northern parts of Europe, we cannot look for much light in regard to religious belief, any more than with respect to political freedom. The degraded serf cannot think or reason, and he believes implicitly whatever his priest inculcates. But with respect to the small portion of persons who have read and travelled, the case is widely different; and none despise more than they, the dogmas of a puerile superstition.

Great Britain, notwithstanding her boast of mental superiority over the nations of the continent, is yet priest-ridden in a considerable degree; and the prosecutions against the publishers of atheistical books, reflect disgrace on the country of Sydney and of Locke. But the number of those who disbelieve the religion which is thus made "part and parcel of the law of the land," has certainly not been diminished by these severities. Persecution has become odious in these latter times, and as its exercise denotes weakness and apprehension, so does it arouse men to reflect and examine. The very denunciations of "infidelity," which teem in English books and papers, serve to show that the assumed evil has spread far and wide, and is confined to no particular order of the community. The faith cannot be very firmly fixed in the minds of the people, since their spiritual leaders take so much pains to fortify and strengthen it. The establishment in London, some few years since, of a college, in which the study of *theology* was for the first time dispensed with, as forming no part of useful education, speaks well for the intellect of the age; and the angry clamours of bigots against the eminent individuals at its head, show full well that they regard it as a fearful weakening of the buttresses by which *the faith* has heretofore been supported.

In our own country, the advancement of liberal opinions has kept pace with the progress of education, and bids fair to liberate the minds of thousands from the influence of infantile prejudice. The establishment of free presses, and the public discussion of the merits of religion, are of recent origin in the United States, and must certainly continue to be attended with beneficial effects. The uneasiness of the believers, and their strong desire to avoid all controversy on the subject, serve to denote their fears and feebleness. Their advantages in wealth and influence are more than counterbalanced by the nature of the cause they would sustain; and they evidently anticipate, with alarm, the issue of the contest.

Such is a brief and accurate statement of the present condition and prospects of the christian religion in the countries where its votaries are the most numerous. The facts are known to every person who has been in the habit of observing the spirit of the times, and no candid man would undertake to deny them. The conclusion is, that so far from the writings of unbelievers being unattended with effects, they are perused by countless numbers of inquirers in every part of christendom; and though the common sense of mankind is in itself sufficient to show the falsity of christianity, yet the writings alluded to have a powerful tendency to confirm the inquirer in his unbiassed conclusions.

It would be useless to deny, however, that the christian religion is upheld by potent supporters. It has arrayed in its defence the far greater portion of the wealth, learning and talent of the nations; for money will always purchase the two latter; and the church militant is little scrupulous as to the means whereby its dominancy is secured. But this comparatively prosperous state of the christian religion, affords no evidence of its *truth*, and no guarantee for its con-

tinuance. The majority of mankind are now aroused to the task of inquiry, instead of resting in servile acquiescence; and even were there not in all christendom a single dissenter from the common creed, still the argument of its dominancy would be a weak one, since five-sixths of the human race reject it as an imposture. The plea would be much stronger if urged in behalf of political tyranny—for despotism reigns undisputed over three-fourths of the habitable globe, and various attempts to shake it from its seat, have been decisively defeated. Would the republican christian permit the advocate of kingly supremacy to cite these facts in evidence of the excellence of that form of government, and as a proof that men will always continue to submit to it? And if he refuse to do this, with what consistency can he assume the same mode of argument in defence of christianity? From an early period of time, men have been enslaved by kings and priests—it may continue so, but the prospect of overthrowing tyranny and delusion is fairer now than at any former period.

### THE MILLERITES.

WE cannot help reflecting, occasionally, upon the amusing embarrassment and confusion which will prevail among the humble followers of the Rev. Mr. Miller, when the morning arrives of the next day after that which is to witness the destruction of this fair earth! When, in the ordinary walks of life, an individual very confidently predicts a storm on the morrow, and the morrow arrives and the day closes without the fulfilment of his prediction, we have often enjoyed the manifestation of his chagrin. But if a man can feel mortified at such a trifling disappointment of his prophetic powers, what confusion and shame-facedness will he not feel who has predicted the end of the world, should this *probable* event not come to pass? We read a short time since, in an old newspaper, an anecdote, which we will relate, and run the risk of telling our readers something they already know.

On one of these occasions, when a similar excitement to the present prevailed, on account of the approach of a comet that was to burn up this earth, an old woman was found buried up to her neck in a cistern of water, where she had remained several days. Upon being discovered and questioned in regard to her motives for placing herself in this predicament, she replied, that as the comet which was to set fire to the earth, was now in sight, she had immersed herself in water, that she might dip her head under when the comet passed over the earth, and thus escape unhurt!

The Millerites are at present in a similarly ridiculous situation. Most of them have left their houses, and have assembled in a grand encampment, where they have built themselves a large tent, in which they are to assemble and be prepared for the great day! But what security, we ask, can they feel under the shadow of this great tent? If a shower of fire is to come from heaven to destroy the earth, there would be a greater show of reason, if they were to immerse themselves in water, like the old woman, instead of hovering under the wings of a combustible tent. Noah, when he had received a divine intimation of the coming deluge, very wisely built himself an ark, which would not only cover its inmates from the descending floods, but would float like a ship upon the waters. Noah depended on natural principles for his security. He did not, like Miller, build a great tent, and then trust that God would work a miracle in his behalf, to save him and his followers. Had he been told that the earth was going to be flooded with fire instead of water, think you he would have built an ark? Very far from it. He would have dug a great cave in the earth, to a sufficient

probable depth, stored it with provisions, and left only a small entrance, and that directly at the top, knowing that heat never descends, and that if the conflagration lasted only until the combustible matters of the earth's surface were consumed, he might escape with impunity! He would not have trusted to miracles. He had not the presumption of the Rev. Mr. Miller and his disciples, the Rev. Messrs. Himes, Fitch, Litch, & Co., who take no measures for their personal security, except to pray and perform religious services, with the evident hope that God will save them by performing a special miracle in their favour! Hence they are to be all assembled together, that the destroying angel, when he descends with his torches and fire-brands, may spare the spot where they are assembled, until some means can be provided for carrying them directly to heaven!

But, alas! what will be the measure of their disappointment when the great day arrives, and no trumpet is sounded from the skies, no redeemer appears in the clouds to take them up to bliss, and no destroying angel descends to scatter fire-brands amongst the dwellings of the wicked people of the world? Fanaticism is so destructive of all the finer feelings of humanity, that we may reasonably suppose that the predicted event is to these fanatics very far from being undesirable. They expect to be saved, some way or another, by divine grace, and their great piety has smothered all their sympathy for the sinners who set their words at naught, and who are to be the only sufferers. What then will be their chagrin, after waiting a whole day and night for the expected wonders, to be greeted on the next morning with the cheerful sounds of labour from the villages, and to see everything undestroyed and unaltered? The very singing of the birds that are just then welcoming in the spring, will seem to be taunting them with their folly.

When they have become convinced that they have made a mistake, and are reluctantly preparing to return to their homes, how will they make a division of that property which they have thrown into a common stock? If parson Miller expects to get the larger share, or even any portion of it, we think he will be disappointed. Indeed, we would advise him, for his personal safety, to *absquatulate*. He must expect no mercy from the hands of his followers, after disappointing them in the exhibition of those great fire-works which are to astonish his disciples and destroy all the rest of the world! They will never forgive him for having duped them with the false promise of such a magnificent spectacle.

But the wicked world's people will find in the embarrassment of the Millerites, a source of infinite amusement. The latter must expect to be made the subject of a great many jokes from the good-natured, and of a great many taunts from the religious. To crown the whole matter, another Fools' Day will be recorded among the Ides of April.

## DIVISION OF LABOUR.

THE only idea that people generally attach to division of labour, is the apportioning of different kinds of labour to different individuals, that each may be performed in the best and most expeditious manner. The idea does not seem to enter their minds, that this division of labour might be used for the purpose of yielding leisure to the working-men, after the performance of a certain amount of labour. The main object seems to be, to get as much service out of the working-men as possible, in a given space of time, keeping them, nevertheless, as long and as closely confined as if they could perform only half as much as they do. Hence the labourer is no less of a slave on account of this division of labour. The only individuals benefited by it are the employers, or

master-manufacturers, and the consumers of the goods. Whenever any invention is made by which that which could formerly be done only in the space of an hour, can now be done in half an hour, justice would seem to require that the working-men be allowed a little more leisure time. "Not so—say the manufacturers—this is the time for doubling our profits." So they turn away half of their working-men, and keep the rest just as severely tasked as ever. Such are the blessings of a new mechanical invention, and of any new facilities for a division of labour!

The celebrated author of "Political Justice," a work that contains too much truth to be popular among Americans, or at least, among those who give the tone to public opinion, made a calculation that all the conveniences of civilised life might be produced if society would divide the labour equally among its members, *by each individual being employed in labour two hours a day!* Yet, how would a proposition of this nature be met by the different classes of our own people? The classes who have the most wealth and leisure, would hang the individual who made the proposition, if they dared. For the want of the opportunity of depriving him of his liberty or destroying his life, they would content themselves with destroying his reputation. In regard to the other classes, who are always sufficiently duped to be jealous of any measure that is condemned by the wealthy, they would reject any such proposition, lest it might possibly affect themselves injuriously at some indefinite future time, when they, too, hope to be wealthy! How many labouring men are induced to submit to slavish toil and unequal laws, by the idea that they themselves, *when they become rich*, may be benefited by such laws and customs! How much better it would be for their interest, to consider that all these unequal laws and customs are so many impassable barriers to their arrival at wealth or even competency! In this manner does the selfishness of a trodden-down class of men lead them to submit to the evils that are heaped upon them, while entertaining the hope that fortune may, at some future time, give them a chance to suck the blood of their fellow-men in the same degree.

Every reflecting observer of society must see and be convinced, that a large portion of the human race are made slaves to certain kinds of labour that are utterly useless, except to the egotism and ostentation of a few. All who are thus employed, are so many taken away from the ranks of useful labour. We need not condemn the luxuries of life as useless, in order to prove the truth of our observation. If men would be satisfied with the necessities and luxuries of life, without toiling after its vanities, we would not condemn their practice. But when we see millions of our fellow-creatures made the slaves of unremitting toil, to create the means of enabling one portion of society to insult all the remainder with mere pomp and vain-glory, we cannot be silent. We can perceive some benefit in the luxuries of life, and are willing that men should toil for them; but we despise and condemn its vanities, since they cannot be gratified except at the expense of the liberty and comfort of a portion of our fellow-creatures.

An equal division of labour among all the individuals of society would be an effectual remedy of these evils. Men would cease to contend very severely for vanities, when they could be gratified only at the expense of their own sweat and blood. But so long as they can live in idleness, and with money that fortune has placed in their lap, can, without exertion, buy the means of appearing greater, mightier, and more lordly than their fellow-men, they will do so. But how is this equal division of labour to be effected? Not surely by a simple legal enactment! It is not in the power of an act of the legislature to revolutionise society. The great



object must be gained by slow and gradual approximation. The existing evils must be cured by the same slow and cautious steps by which they were produced and accumulated. Whole folios might be written over to show how this object must be gained, and still the whole process would not be unfolded. Suffice it to say, that the general principles upon which all such reformatations should be grounded, are the principles of democracy. Let no single law exist in the statutes one moment after it is discovered to be unequal in its bearing upon the different members and grades of the community.

The above article, which we have just penned, is desultory ; but we flatter ourselves that the reader may be profited by its suggestions, and perhaps led onward by reflection and observation to the development of the benefits suggested.

#### INTELLECTUAL SENSATIONS.

THERE is such a variety of sensations produced in the human mind, concerning things about which there can be but one opinion that is true, that we must necessarily conclude (if we, like our mythologists, admit these romantic passions to be any mark of truth at all) that the greater part, if not all, of our dealers in divinity, are still leading us into error, as sensations, sometimes, though they vary in every individual, are made the convincing proofs of any creed they wish to impose upon us. These sensitive feelings, which most sectarians denominate the criterion of truth, are nothing but excited imagination, or her vicegerents. That all creeds, east and west, have some overflowing zeal and fidelity, passions and prejudices, interests and motives, in the religion they profess, we have no reason to doubt—but we must certainly doubt that all this variety expresses one general truth, though equally intense. Imagination, the main-spring of action in the mind, is remarkably fond of enthusiastic visitors, and when these guests can baffle her guardian (judgment and reason), she runs into the most extravagant courses with her sycophants, and is made to believe the most incredible things. Those voluntary visitors most indelibly impress upon her mind all the romantic fictions that art and eccentricity can invent—and they, well aware that her guardian will severely correct her, instruct her that it is no other than the Devil buffeting her, and not to believe him, but stop her ears to his puerile and tinsel logic. Thus, oh men of credulity ! ye are made to believe so much foolish caprice, that is so pernicious to your happiness and dissolving to social fraternity, that so often overwhelms you with afflictions through all the vicissitudes of human life, and that is so all-pervading an obstacle to useful knowledge.

To prepare you for the yoke of bondage, servitude, and oppression, and for pillars to support the fame and glory of our dealers in speculative divinity, or ostensible speculators, your first lesson is to despise every one for the enormous crime he commits in not believing as you do ; and they believe that Adam was the beginning of all mankind—caused universal damnation to all posterity by eating an apple—that Sodom was sunk for her wickedness—that fire and brimstone rained down from heaven, in which place we regret that they have any—that Joshua arrested the course of the sun, that he might have more day-light to slay his fellow-men—that the electric thunders of ancient Palestine, were the great voice of Jehovah—that Egyptian magicians turned the river Nile into blood—that one was caught up into heaven in a whirlwind—that another rode there with horses and a chariot of fire—others were thrown into the most vehement flames and scorched not their garments—that God, after having spent an eternity in prescient and all-wise contemplation,

created mankind, who have since caused him to repent—that he passed sentence of death upon Hezekiah—then, brought to repentance by contrition, suspended his vindictive wrath, and prolonged his longevity fifteen years—that, in a certain war, he gave orders to butcher the male little ones, massacre the mothers, and all, except the daughters—that he damned illegitimates, even unto the tenth generation—that the Devil, after losing his office in heaven, by a bloody contest, molested God's earthly plantation with such unrelenting tyranny, that he was obliged to descend and be publicly executed to appease him, after giving a mortgage of nine-tenths of its human productions, which the people are to redeem themselves.

Other credulous mortals must believe that Mahomet, in one night, rode through ninety heavens, upon his horse Borak—had a long conversation with God, his angelic, super-angelic, and abstract beings—conversed privately with Gabriel—explored all the planets diffused through the boundless regions of space—had orders from God to make proselytes, with the barbarian instruments of death—in doing which, he taught his army the art of a gladiator—cut the moon in two parts, took one hemisphere to light them. Idolatrous nations are taught to believe things equally as absurd and heterogeneous.

Such, ye doctors of divinity, are the effects of sensations produced by fanaticism in the human mind ! These overflowing excitements by which we are so frequently imposed upon, are called by many the change of heart, or change from nature to grace. I cannot think that nature is so easily flattered, as to turn out of her course to please a few monopolising individuals, but rather think that our passions deceive us. Sensations, though ever so acute, prove nothing—inform us of nothing—but, like the sound of a bell, are a subject of inquiry, and the impression they make upon us may be truth or falsehood. Thus you arrange three vessels of water before you, one ice-water, one at the same temperature of your body, the third as hot as you can bear your hand in it—then immerse one hand in the ice, the other in the hot water, and then immerse them both together in the medium between, and you will find that the hand from the ice water will feel very warm, and that from the hot water will feel very cold.

Now, which hand or sensation tells you the truth ? Neither : they both deceive you ; and, as a chemical process, will deceive the corporeal senses, so theological, likewise, deceives the intellectual.

It is with unfeigned reluctance that I hear so many talk of being buffeted by the Devil, when attempting to speak in the synagogue, getting into trials, and being dark in their minds, when if they would but think and reflect without prejudice, they would find their demon to be judgment and reason, admonishing them for the shame of their folly.

My fellow men ! I call on you, in the name of common sense and the honour you owe to your country, to present these vile seducers to your natural reason for discussion. Listen with candour to her decisions, that you may no longer mistake her admonitions for buffetings of demons. What man of sense, that is not a speculator or an Egyptian taskmaster, will presume to contend, that, while he knows not what is transpiring in his own family, he knows what is going on in heaven ? and that the sensations he produces in credulous minds, by telling such stories, are his witnesses of the fact ? Deluded men that believe him !

Do you believe in the Salem witchcraft ? Do you believe that justice requires you to abstain from that insatiable thirst for conjugal pleasure ; to abandon your affectionate wives and lovely children, and unite with the Shakers ? If you do not, some do ; and are not these sensations a proof of right ? Certainly, as much so as any others. What, then, can

sensations not prove? Answer: that judgment and reason are the Devil.

Do philanthropy and patriotism stimulate our mythologists to teach us such absurdities? or is it tyranny, fame, and fortune? If God predestinated things from all eternity, can our faith change them? And if foreknown in the beginning, were they not also decreed? For what reason have we so many mythologists? Does God want interpreters to construe his meaning? Does he select one to tyrannize over another? Will he, though more merciful than our earthly parents, doom us to endless woe for sinning but a moment? You say time, here, is nothing, compared with eternity—if so, does not God damn us for nothing at all? Answer, inconsistent men!

It is time, my friends, to cast off the shackles of this birth-right of bondage—part the gigantic chain of superstitious ignorance, that has been dragged so long down the channel of tradition—take the veil of obscurity and fanaticism from our eyes, and search the huge volume of nature for instruction.

Take nature's path, and mad opinions leave.

Her instruction will teach us to be useful to ourselves, and to our fellow citizens; to be friendly in cases of emergency, to be good to the afflicted widow, to wipe the relenting tear from the orphan, to respect the poor veteran who purchased our liberty, to look upon the poor and distressed with pity, and not with indignation, to give them relief by donations of real substance, and not by sighs, and groans, and long prayers, to love virtue in whatever degree we find her, to hate vice, even if we find it in divines.

Ye labourers, mechanics, and manufacturers, and ye hardy yeomen of the land, the very bone and muscle of our country—are you stoop to priests? If not, join hand and hand, and show that the volume of nature is in your possession, and that your senses are not to be nulled, nor your independent spirits put down by the combinations of the day.

## THE INQUISITION.

TAVERNIER, in his *Travels*, informs us that a man of letters, who had fallen into the hands of the inquisitors, said, that nothing troubled him so much as the ignorance of the inquisitor and his council, when they put any question—so that he was inclined to believe that not one of them had really read the scriptures.

It was only as far back as the year 1761, that Gabriel Malagrida, an old man of seventy, was burnt by these *evangelical executioners*! His trial was printed at Amsterdam, 1762, from the Lisbon copy. And for what was this unhappy Jesuit condemned? Not, as some have imagined, for his having been concerned in a conspiracy against the king of Portugal. No other charge is laid to him in this trial, but that of having indulged certain heretical notions, which any other tribunal would have looked upon as the delirious fancies of an old fanatic.

"The people stand so much in fear of this diabolical tribunal, that parents deliver up their children, husbands their wives, and masters their servants, to its officers, without daring to murmur. The prisoners are kept for a long time, till they themselves turn their own accusers, and declare the cause of their imprisonment—for they are neither told their crime nor confronted with witnesses. As soon as they are imprisoned, their friends go into mourning, and speak of them as dead, not daring to solicit their pardon, lest they should be brought in as accomplices. When there is no shadow of proof against the pretended criminal, he is discharged, after suffering the most cruel tortures, a tedious and dreadful imprisonment, and the loss of the greatest part of his effects."

The following passages from the narrative of Mr. Dellon, who had been thrown into the inquisition at Goa, and confined in a dungeon of ten feet square, upwards of two years, without seeing any person but the jailor who brought him his victuals, except when he was brought to trial, for the *alleged crime of charging this merciful tribunal with cruelty*, afford a pretty tolerable idea how far such a charge might have been made with justice, and is truly descriptive of that dread sacrifice:

Which had with horror shock'd  
The darkest pagans, offered to their gods.

"During the months of November and December, I heard, every morning, the shrieks of the unfortunate victims who were undergoing the *question*. I remembered to have heard, before I was cast into prison, that the *auto da fe* was generally celebrated on the first Sunday in advent, because on that day is read in the churches that part of the gospel, in which mention is made of the *last judgment*—and the inquisitors pretend by this ceremony to exhibit a lively emblem of that awful event. I was likewise convinced that there were a great number of prisoners, besides myself—the profound silence, which reigned within the walls of the building, having enabled me to count the number of doors which were opened at the hours of meals. However, the first and second Sundays of advent passed by without my hearing of anything, and I prepared to undergo another year of melancholy captivity, when I was aroused from my despair on the 11th of January, by the noise of the guards removing the bars from the door of my prison. The *alcalde* presented me with a habit, which he ordered me to put on, and to make myself ready to attend him when he should come again. Thus saying, he left a lighted lamp in my dungeon. The guards returned about two o'clock in the morning, and led me out into a long gallery, where I found a number of the companions of my fate drawn up in a rank against the wall—I placed myself among the rest, and several more soon joined the melancholy band. The profound silence and stillness caused them to resemble statues, more than the animated bodies of human creatures. The women, who were clothed in a similar manner, were placed in a neighbouring gallery, where we could not see them—but I remarked that a number of persons stood by themselves at some distance, attended by others who wore long black dresses, and who walked backwards and forwards occasionally. I did not then know who these were—but I was afterwards informed that the former were the victims who were condemned to be burned, and the others were their confessors.

"After we were all ranged against the wall of this gallery, we received each a large wax taper. They then brought us a number of dresses made of yellow cloth, with the cross of St. Andrew painted before and behind. This is called the *san benito*. The relaxed heretics wear another species of robe, called the *samarra*, the ground of which is grey. The portrait of the sufferer is painted upon it, placed upon burning torches, with flames and demons all around. Caps were then produced, called *carrochas*, made of pasteboard, pointed like sugar loaves, and all covered over with Devils and flames of fire.

"The great bell of the cathedral began to ring a little before sunrise, which served as a signal to warn the people of Goa to come and behold the august ceremony of the *auto da fe*; and then we were made to proceed from the gallery one by one. I remarked, as we passed into the great hall, that the inquisitor was sitting at the door, with his secretary by him, and that he delivered every prisoner into the hands of a particular person, who was to be his guard to the place of burning. These person are called *parrinyrs*, or *godfathers*. My godfather



was the commander of a ship. I went forth with him, and, as soon as we were in the street, I saw that the procession was commenced by the dominican friars, who have this honour because St. Dominic founded the inquisition. These are followed by the prisoners, who walk one after the other, each having his godfather by his side, and a lighted taper in his hand. The least guilty go foremost; and, as I did not pass for one of them, there were many who took precedence of me. The woman were mixed promiscuously with the men. We all walked barefoot, and the sharp stones of the streets of Goa wounded my tender feet and caused the blood to stream; for we were made to march through the chief streets of the city; and we were regarded every where by an innumerable crowd of people, who had assembled from all parts of India to behold this spectacle; for the inquisition takes care to announce it long before, in the most remote parishes. At length, we arrived at the church of St. Francis, which was, for this time, destined for the celebration of the act of faith. On one side of the altar was the grand inquisitor and his counsellors; and on the other, the viceroy of Goa and his court. All the prisoners are seated to hear a sermon. I observed that those prisoners who wore the horrible *carrochas* came in last in the procession. One of the augustine monks ascended the pulpit and preached for a quarter of an hour. The sermon being concluded, two readers went up to the pulpit, one after the other, and read the sentences of the prisoners. *My joy was extreme, when I heard that my sentence was not to be burnt, but to be a galley-slave for five years!* After the sentences were read, they summoned forth those miserable victims who were destined to be immolated by the holy inquisition. The images of the heretics who had died in prison were brought up at the same time, their bones being contained in small chests covered with flames and demons. An officer of the secular tribunal now came forward and seized these unhappy people, after they had each received a slight blow upon the breast, from the *alcaldes*, to intimate that they were abandoned. They were then led out to the bank of the river, where the viceroy and court were assembled, and where the fagots had been prepared the preceding day. As soon as they arrive at this place, the condemned persons are asked in what religion they choose to die—and the moment they have replied to this question, the executioner seizes them and binds them to a stake in the midst of the fagots. The day after the execution, the portraits of the dead are carried to the church of the dominicans. The heads only are represented (very accurately drawn—for the inquisition keeps excellent limners for the purpose) surrounded by demons and flames—and underneath is the name and crime of the person who has been burned."

On reading the above account, we may be at a loss to decide which should most excite our indignation and surprise—the pitiful evasion which these wolves in sheep's clothing have recourse to, in order to avoid the imputation of shedding men's blood, by substituting fire and fagots for the more merciful operation of the axe,\* or that consummate hypocrisy manifested in the *affected pity* shown to their unhappy victims when they deliver them over to the secular arm for punishment, after irrevocably sealing their fate! †

\* The inquisitors have chosen to punish heretics by FIRE, in preference to any other punishment, in order to elude a certain maxim; because, as they say, burning a man does not BREAK HIS BONES, nor SHED HIS BLOOD!

† The inquisitors, who are ecclesiastics, do not pronounce the sentence of death, but form and read an act, in which they say, that the criminal being convicted of such a crime, by his own confession, is, with much RELUCTANCE, delivered to the secular power, to be punished according to his demerits. True, indeed it is, that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel!

One would think, after what has been said, that no people could be sunk into such a state of mental degradation, as not to hail, with the most enthusiastic rapture, the happy era which promised deliverance from so cruel and tyrannical a system! Yet, strange as it may appear, we are told that the humane and enlightened measures of the cortes, the *abolition of the inquisition*, was considered by the population of Spain as an *infringement of their liberties*!!

## RESURRECTION.

"THE BESOM OF TRUTH" is the title of a small tract that has recently reached our hands. Its author subscribes himself "Russell Canfield." Its purport appears to be an endeavour to show that the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ, as taught by the bible, is not a subject of rational belief. He gives a summary of his essay by proposing nineteen questions for the consideration of the clergy, and students in divinity. Though we are neither a clergyman nor a divinity student, we shall offset his endeavour by a feeble endeavour of our own to make a satisfactory reply to the said questions *seriatim*; and we hope it will satisfy him, if it does not any one else. Will the editor of the *Investigator* please to publish the same?

1. Did one, or two, or three, or five women, first visit the sepulchre; and for what purpose; or with no specific object?

Answer. According to Mark, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and Salome," came to the sepulchre. Matthew says that many women followed him from Galilee. These were among them. Luke says that these and certain others came. So that there was quite a number—*five or more*. The precise number is not specified. Their purpose was to "*anoint him*," which they could not very well do without "*seeing*" the sepulchre, if, as they supposed, he was therein. That was unquestionably their "*specific object*."

2. What transpired at the tomb; an earthquake?

Ans. The rolling back of the "very great stone," shook the earth near the guards, which their sudden alarm and notorious superstitious fear aided them to magnify into "an earthquake."

3. Did one, or more, angel or angels, man or men, appear to a woman, or women, and what was said and done?

Ans. "*One man*" appeared; and to the indefinite number of "*women*." They mistook him for an "angel." He said—"Fear not." They "quickly departed" to announce the fact of his resurrection to his disciples.

4. Where, and in what position, were he or they seen, as noticed in the preceding question?

Ans. On "the right side" of the sepulchre, "he" was seen "sitting."

5. Did he or they send a message to the disciples; and by whom, and what was it; or was a question merely asked?

Ans. "*He sent a message*;" by the women; his message, in substance, was, that "He is risen from the dead, and that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him as he said unto you." What question?

6. Did one or more go into the tomb; whether male or female; and did one or more look into it only, and depart?

Ans. *More than one* went in; they were *females*; one looked in; Peter; afterwards, Mary. *Peter and his companion* "departed."

7. Did Jesus appear to one or more, early, and what passed?

Ans. To *one*. He introduced himself to her and told her not to touch him. By the natural virtue of rumor, it was bruited that he appeared to *all* the women; and this became interwoven with the narrator's stock of information.

8. Where did Jesus first meet his disciples; in Galilee, or in Jerusalem; and were they terrified or glad?

Ans. First, in *Galilee* he met them; afterwards, he *showed himself* to them twice in *Jerusalem*, and once at the sea of *Tiberias*. When he first *showed himself*, they were for the moment "terrified;" recognition shortly made them "glad."

9. Whether did he confer on them the holy-ghost at their first meeting, with extraordinary powers; or was this gift bestowed afterwards, in the form of split tongues?

Ans. The first time he showed himself to them, he conferred the holy-ghost on ten; and afterwards it was bestowed on the whole, about one hundred and twenty in number, at the appearance of the cloven tongues.

10. If the promise, Matt. xxviii. 20, be correct, how can John xvi. 7, be true, compared with xx. 22?

Ans. Before the crucifixion, he promised to send the holy ghost, if he departed, John xvi. 7. He did depart from them after the crucifixion, and afterwards came and breathed, or sent from himself, upon them the holy ghost; John xx. 22. Wherein do these disagree with Matt. xxviii. 20?

11. Does the gospel of Luke agree with the first chapter of Acts, as to the time of the supposed ascension?

Ans. The former does not deny what the latter asserts. Wherein, then, is the disagreement?

[The editor, in cutting this article from the paper, left 12, 13, and 14 behind—which were printed higher up on the other side of the paper. The error was not discovered until too late to send for them.]

15. If flesh and bone can convey the holy spirit, why may not any man communicate this gift?

Ans. If it be so, any man *can*.

16. Does this story agree with Paul's description of the resurrection state, 1 Cor. 15; and which is "revelation"?

Ans. Was St. Paul infallible? Wherein is the disagreement? Where is either called revelation? All to be *negative*.

17. If Jesus conferred the holy-ghost, as we read, why did not the disciples know him at the sea of *Tiberias*?

Ans. What effect was the holy-ghost expected to produce on their eye-sight? It was early in the morning when they saw him. He was on the shore; they were in their boat, on the water, and intent on their business. A deficiency of light prevented immediate recognition. When he spoke, they knew him—as Mr. Canfield might possibly recognise his military friend by the *voice*, when the *uniform* would *deceive* him.

18. When we shall be "raised in his likeness," shall we not also be the subjects of continual hunger?

Ans. If in his present likeness, we shall not.

19. Finally, and lastly, if Christ were raised as related, in what particulars does a post-resurrection state differ from that which is contradistinguished from it but by begin mortal?

Ans. Unintelligibly propounded. What state is contradistinguished? An *ante*-resurrection state? If so, and if the post-resurrection state is mortal, and we know the *ante* is, of course no *difference* subsists.

Thus have we proceeded with the interrogations, and endeavoured to "digest" Mr. Canfield's "chart;" but whether we have answered them "satisfactorily" to him, remains for him to say; and whether we are entitled to "a diploma," remains also for him to determine. If he is employed by any theological seminary to draft diplomas, or is the general theological agent, we will thank him for our diploma soon.

We pretend to no refutation; but merely to assist that *giant*, "Who promised, before an audience, to answer them, and who had Mr. C.'s manuscript six weeks, and returned it *without a remark*." It is somewhat marvellous that he did

not plead an *intuitive* series of answers, but not verbally explicable; a *mysterious* consciousness, through *faith*, of their weakness, but not revealed to erring reason.

## MIRACLES.

TILL within some three centuries past, it was the custom throughout Christendom, and it still is the custom among the ignorant, to account for whatever is unusual, and which cannot be explained by any known law of nature, by ascribing it to supernatural influence. Such works were supposed to be performed by some special supernatural interposition, either of God or the Devil; and whosoever performed them, was set down either as a saint or a sorcerer. Whether he should be considered as the one, or the other, depended principally upon the prejudices or the caprice of the beholders.

In modern times, and among educated men, science has got the better of this credulity. The regularity of the laws of nature has been tested in so many of the great operations of the universe, that it has come to be received as a general principle, that whatever happens, happens in conformity to some general law.

Should a person, now-a-days, present himself, who had the power, or the apparent power, of restoring the dead to life, by a word, or of opening the eyes of the blind, merely by commanding them to open, howsoever much we might be astonished at these remarkable performances, we should not ascribe them to any supernatural power; we should suppose them to occur in conformity to some law of nature, hitherto unknown; and instead of resting in a wondering and superstitious ignorance, the whole science of the age would be turned to discover what that law was. Many have believed, in modern times, in the wonders, or, as the ancients would have expressed it, in the miracles of animal magnetism; yet no one has thought of ascribing them to a special interposition of the Deity.

Even an inability on the part of the performer of these wonderful works to explain how he performs them, does not lead us, in these times, to ascribe such works to any supernatural agency. Zerah Colburn had a wonderful power of solving arithmetical problems, which he was totally unable to explain. Nobody, however, supposes that Zerah Colburn was inspired.

Even the allegation on the part of the performer of such works, that he performs them by the direct aid of the Deity, does not, in these times, acquire any credit with rational men. It is undeniable that some wonderful cures are performed in ways alleged to be miraculous; it is beyond all question that many camp-meetings are attended with effects of a singular and inexplicable kind. But the alleged miraculous nature of these effects does not prevent the educated men of the present day from attributing them to some unknown natural cause.

Suppose that Joe Smith, the mormon prophet, should actually, before our eyes, raise the dead by a word, and heal the sick by a touch. We should be vastly astonished at such phenomena, but we apprehend that no rational man would, on that account alone, be inclined to receive Joe Smith as a prophet and divine teacher, or to believe every word he chose to utter; especially if we consider the character he is said to bear. Indeed, the most strenuous advocates for the miracles of former times, have taken good care to secure themselves against the necessity of giving credit to any modern miracles, by laying it down as a general rule, we know not upon what authority, that the age of miracles is past.

Now, without going into any considerations respecting the



testimony we have, as to the actual performance of the wonderful works recorded in the gospels—and there are many serious and weighty objections to be urged as to that matter, the quarter part of which never yet have been urged, much less answered—no one, we think, will undertake to maintain that the wonderful works recorded in the gospels ought to have any greater weight with us, as evidence, than if they were actually performed before our own eyes.

The question then, thus simplified, becomes this. Because a man in our presence performs a wonderful work—heals the sick, for example, in a sudden and astonishing way, or restores one to life who apparently was dead—is that a reason, in itself, why we must implicitly believe everything he chooses to tell us? All that we actually see, is the wonderful work. He who does it, tells us that he does it by the immediate aid of God, and that God enables him to do it, as a testimony that he is a messenger from God, and that all he says ought to be implicitly believed. But how do we know that he tells the truth? What guarantee do we have that he does not deceive us? None in the world, except his bare word; none in the world, except those general grounds of confidence which may exist in the case of any other witness, and which are just as strong without the wonderful work, as with it.

A man comes to us and represents himself as a messenger from a certain person, as to the existence of which person we have no assurance. We ask him for the proof of his mission. He performs a wonderful work—for instance, he restores a dead child to life. We ask how he did that wonderful work? I did it, he replies, by the aid and power of the person whose messenger I am. So far from relieving any doubts we might have had, the case now becomes more difficult than before. We were before required to believe two things only—first, the existence of the person sending; secondly, the fact of a message sent. We are now required to believe, in addition, two other things, namely, a power to perform wonderful works, existing in the person sending, and a transmission of that power to the messenger; and all these things we are required to believe, the last as well as the first, upon the bare assertion of the messenger alone.

A wonderful work affords no testimony that extends beyond itself. All we actually see, is the work alone. There is, to be sure, a seeming connection, but which, after all, may be merely accidental, between that work and a man whom we denominate the performer. But how he performed it, by what power or virtue he performed it, whether, in fact, he performed it at all, these things are not apparent. If such works are performed or take place by any natural means, by repeated observation of them, whenever they are performed or take place, we may at length discover what that natural means is, and how and in what way they happen. But if the work be in fact supernatural, if it be a deviation from the laws of nature, caused by the special interference of the Deity, we never can know it to be so, without another special interference of the Deity, whereby he communicates that knowledge directly and specially to our particular minds. When the performer of a wonderful work tells us that he does it by the particular aid of God, it is still the attestation of a man merely—it is the attestation of the messenger himself—it is not that "attestation of God" which christians say is absolutely necessary to "authenticate" a revelation. To give any weight of evidence to the mere wonderful work itself, either independently of, or combined with, the testimony of the performer, is to assume that every wonderful work, which we cannot otherwise account for, must of necessity be explained by supposing a special divine interference. That is a doctrine not likely to find countenance in this inquisitive and intelligent age, and which, if

it did find countenance, would dispense, at once and for ever, with the necessity of any farther scientific investigations or inquiries. We have heard of an old man, who, some years ago, was very much shocked at an attempt to explain according to the principles of the science of electricity, what had happened to a house which had been struck by lightning. "Nonsense," said the old man, "the lightning goes where God sends it. To explain it otherwise is impious!" There are other bigots in the world besides that old man—nevertheless, his way of viewing matters has gone much out of fashion. Among the educated and intelligent it has ceased to exist.

The conclusion then to which we come, is this. The wonderful works recorded in the gospels, supposing we believe them to have been actually performed, do not afford, and cannot afford, in themselves, any evidence whatever that the bible is a revelation from God. This is a conclusion from which no rational man can escape. A rational man may believe that the bible is a revelation from God—but he must believe it independently of any belief in the truth of the wonderful works it records. In point of fact, so far from believing the gospels to contain a revelation, because they believe in the performance of the wonderful works therein described, it happens to most rational men, that they believe in the actual performance of the christian miracles, only because they believe the gospels to contain a revelation. It is the revelation that supports the miracles, not the miracles that support the revelation.

[For the foregoing admirable articles, the editor is indebted to a *Boston Investigator*.]

I am more proud of my progress in atheism, than of what I have learnt in astronomy. At nineteen I thought the heavens proved a god—now I see in them nothing but matter and motion.—*Lalande*.

No. 20, will contain a *Third Bulletin from the Seat of War, Edinburgh, containing a notice of Robinson's Indictment, and the Trials of Robinson and Finlay*. Also a second notice, of *Kant's Philosophy*.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

## GEORGE BANCROFT VERSUS VOLTAIRE.

IT is one of the most shining and generous qualities of an historian and reformer, to ever onward, in the spirit of true candour, noble motives to those who have sought to obtain, by "noble means," what they have deemed "noble ends." The tendency to impugn the motives of past reformers, because their contemplated reforms jarred with the popular opinions as well as the popular prejudices of the day, is becoming as systematic and uniform at this day, as it has been popular and ungenerous since superstition has dictated nearly all historical criticism. The latest instance of this contracted and *carping* spirit, in reviewing the reformers of the past, can be seen in the lecture by George Bancroft, reported in the *Boston Post*, of Nov. 30. It is devoted to a review of the mission of protestantism, and the scepticism which succeeded its establishment in Europe. That portion of it which speaks of Voltaire and his motives, contains the most unsparing bigotry and falsehood I have met with for the last twenty years. I am completely confounded by the sweeping censure of Mr. Bancroft, particularly as his remarks are in direct contradiction of the views of many of the ablest historians of Voltaire's day. If those who are acquainted with Voltaire's works can find any justification for the following report of Bancroft's remarks upon the Philosopher of Ferney, they will confer a favour upon one sceptic, at least, by pointing out the evidences:

"The spirit of doubt diffused itself through France, and Voltaire became its organ. There was material in abundance at his hand, in the veteran abuses that ground the nation as though it were placed between the upper and nether mill-stones—he employed his keen wit upon this material with savage delight. This prince of scoffers sneered at existing institutions, both good and bad—he dealt out blows against *faith* as well as superstition, religion as well as corruption. But Voltaire never lived for the people (!!)—never bent his ear to catch the accents of lowly humanity—he laboured for the aristocracy—he was a glass that reflected the licentiousness, the hollow-heartedness of his time. Nor did he get a glimpse of the great principles that give character to the age, and were at work all around him—to him the great revolutions of the French monarchy were but so many historic anecdotes, with no connecting link of principle to bind and harmonise them."

If the above extract does not contain the most complete concentration of sophistry, contradiction, and falsehood, we have learned the meaning of those words to very little purpose. It contradicts the lecturer, history, and itself. In the beginning of the lecture, he remarks, that "With the establishment of the right of *private judgment*, the mission of protestantism was fulfilled. But out of this movement sprung that spirit of doubt and denial that diffused itself over all Europe—the

free inquiry that had begun with religion, extended itself to the *whole range of human thought*. The human mind released from the logic of the schoolmen, and the dogmatism of the theologians, revelled in its freedom—religion shared the fate of superstition—the true that of the false. A wide-spread scepticism followed."

Let us now refer to the harmony and consistency of this lecturer, taking his own views for an arbiter, and judging him by his own words. We learn, what every ordinary mind already knows, that when the mind is released from unnatural tyranny, it re-acts upon its oppressors. The church, which gave the only religious idea in Europe, had been the mental tyrant of Europe. Protestantism was nothing but the resumption of a natural right—consequently, when the mind became free from church trammels, it very naturally tended toward doubts—doubts of the divine authority of that church which could thus burn and scorch religion upon humanity—which could engender hatred, discord, crime, and murder, in order to prove that "man should love his neighbour as himself!" This was the scepticism, and it was the result of the unerring laws of mind—laws which admit of no exceptions, and which furnish no want of efficacy in the history of mind.

Now for Voltaire's agency in the progress of this scepticism. Bancroft says, "Doubt diffused itself through France, and Voltaire became its organ." Very good—Voltaire possessed a keen sense of the ludicrous, as well as an inquiring mind, and while he denounced the abuses of the church, he examined its claims to universal credence, and finding them unworthy, he denounced the institution itself as useless. This, we admit, was in opposition to the popular prejudices of that day as well as this, but it is no evidence of ignoble motives in Voltaire, nor should it subject his memory to the dogmatic abuse of reformers of a later age. Bancroft also states that Voltaire had an abundance of material at hand, in the abuses which ground the nation as between two mill-stones. What does he mean by the nation? Will he adopt the democratic answer of Sieyès, that France was the three estates, and that the third estate was France, *without the throne and church*? But whether he does, or does not admit this definition, he cannot escape one conclusion, because it is one of those stubborn things called *facts*. The third estate, the people of France, were the ones who suffered the greatest share of this "upper and nether mill-stone" grinding—and the institutions of France, which were the productions of the throne and the church, the only legislative powers of France, were enforced by the aristocracy. The aristocracy of France was both civil and religious; and the oppressions which France suffered, were found to exist in this class, or these two classes, the aristocracy and the church. These two classes, with their institutions, were the "veteran abuses" upon which Voltaire is represented as expending his wit. Now, where, in the name of reason and truth, are the *good*



*institutions* which Voltaire confounded with the *bad*? Where is that generous and confiding faith which he confounded with the mummeries of catholicism, and the restless intrigue of French protestantism? Let us state the question *pro* and *con*, as Mr. Bancroft has himself done, in his lecture:

*Pro*.—Voltaire denounced the "veteran abuses" which ground France as between two mill-stones. (The abuses were found in a church as corrupt as hell itself—an aristocracy as tyrannical as power could make it—and a loose, incongruous system of government, so replete with the fragments of ancient abuse, unenlightened jurisprudence, and domestic tyranny, as to become the scorn and terror of France.)

*Con*.—"Voltaire laboured for the aristocracy—he never bent his ear to catch the accents of lowly humanity—he was a glass that reflected the licentiousness and hollow-heartedness of his time!"

*Pro*.—Voltaire denounced the abuses of the church, which, with the throne, consumed one-fourth of the productions of the labourer.

*Con*.—"Voltaire laboured for the aristocracy!"

*Pro*.—Voltaire denounced the *lettres de cachet*, by which the people were arrested without accusation, and imprisoned for life without trial—he denounced the church tithes, which required *doubt* to sustain *faith* by the sweat of his brow—he denounced slavery in all its forms—he denounced and ridiculed the internal government of France, which was crushing the enterprise of France—he denounced all injustice and tyranny, and pleaded the cause of the people with uniform zeal and fervour.

*Con*.—"Voltaire never lived for the people—he laboured for the aristocracy!"

*Pro*.—(Voltaire explained and illustrated the principles of government, and exposed the errors and weakness of governments, and referred the distress and suffering of Europe to bad government—and traced the progress of government from the dark ages to his own time.—*Voltaire's Works*.)

*Con*.—"He did not get a glimpse of the great principles that give character to the age, and were at work all around him!" "To him, the great revolutions of the French monarchy were but so many historic anecdotes, with no connecting link of principle to bind and harmonize them."

What revolutions does Mr. B refer to? The civil wars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries? We opine that Mr. B. was more eager to tickle the ears of a religious audience, than to utter a candid review of a reformer's deeds and motives. We wish to ask him how a man can labour for an *aristocracy*, when the whole tenor of his writings is opposed to that aristocracy, and when the reforms which he labours to effect would instantly destroy that aristocracy, and whose reforms could not and *did not* obtain, until that aristocracy was swept away in a deluge of blood? How can it be said, that "He was a glass that reflected the licentiousness and hollow-heartedness of his time," when all his pleadings were for the people, and all his teachings, civil or religious, were moral, and replete with dissertations upon the necessity of morality? What faith was there in France that he could take cognizance of, and what existing institutions, good and bad, did he sneer at? These institutions can be named, if they existed. But the whole secret lies in his opposition to the French "church and state"—theocratic, aristocratic, monarchy. The "good institutions" are all comprised in his scepticism, and that miserable church of France, which had festered and rotted in its corruptions, is made to represent a series of useful institutions, which Voltaire is represented as having opposed; and this representation is made and used merely as a catch-word to wheedle popular prejudice against Voltaire, or as a vent to sectarian bile and narrowness. Voltaire and Paine have shared a common fate. They both laboured with

a zeal and energy scarcely paralleled in history, to restore to humanity its rights and powers, which had been wrenched away by kingcraft, priestcraft, and ignorance; and for their opposition to priestcraft, their other labours have been disregarded by the slaves of the church, and its venal minions the clergy. That a common cry should be sent forth from the pulpit, echoed by every clerical mastiff and "lay bloodhound" in the country against such men, is not at all surprising; but when men whose talents justify us in expecting from them "candour and generosity," are found joining the saintly pack against well-meaning, if erring, and of, right or wrong, sincere friends of their race, we may well exclaim with Voltaire—"If these are the fruits of superstition, may God speedily rid the earth of her damnable influence!"

There is scarcely a particle or line of truth, fairness, or even an indication of ordinary talent, in this attack upon Voltaire; and much as we concede to Bancroft, as an able and powerful historian, we must subtract much from that "much," for "sycophancy and wheedling." How a man can thus deliberately contradict himself, and misrepresent historical fact, and *give the lie to a man's own words* repeatedly expressed, is more, much more, than we can comprehend; and more than we shall attempt to reconcile with the lecturer's ability to do strict justice to all the reformers of the eighteenth century. To all who agree or dissent with him, we refer to Voltaire's own works and language, and we would leave the decision to any man of common integrity and ability, whether without or within the church.

MONTGARNIER.

## UNIVERSALISM—NOT TRUE.

EVERY word is an effect of what is called mind, and has a definite idea. Ever and ever, *aion aionian*, ages of ages, is a period of indefinite duration. Pain is suffering. Penalty is pain, inflicted for transgression, by Deity himself—from *pena* or *penis*, punishment; *al*, or *alla*, the prophet or Deity; and *te*, thyself. Ever and still, are enduring indefinitely. Now then, after the resurrection, when the son of man shall come in his glory, with all the holy angels, and be seated on the throne of his glory, he shall, as judge, send the wicked into "ever-enduring fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels"—or, if this does not suit the case in view of universalists, then, after the second resurrection, "whosoever's name was not found written in the book of life (persons, of course), were cast into the lake of fire, which was the second death;" spiritual, of course, as opposite to everlasting life, or the second ever-enduring life—or, if still this will not do, it is said of some persons, after the restoration of the earth, as a new earth, that as "sorcerers or poisoners, they are without the city," and of them, they are unholy still. Lastly, on all hands it must be admitted that the bible speaks of a new creation, a "*kane tisis*" from a fallen nature, and insists that this all-necessary and indestructible work of the holy spirit must be experienced; of a choosing before the foundation of the world, and a predestination unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ himself, to the praise of the glory of his grace, not of all, but a part. Where then is universalism, which says all, and carries all, either through fire, flood, or death, to heaven? If the bible where true, universalism would be false. The formula is thus: ever, still, accursed, sorcerers, after redemption is past—that is, ever-enduring torment, ever-enduring penalty, or ever-enduring damnation, or loss, or anything that sectarianism or sophistry can make it.

Again, trinitarianism—not true. Personality, when applied to persons, requires a name; and, by conversion, a name

personality. There are in the bible three distinct names of the Deity. Personality is individuality; therefore, there are three Gods. Again, relationship in perpetuated existence, implies, as it regards the father, priority in existence, because begetting is an act, and being brought forth an event; it also indicates, without a shadow of a doubt, personality and individuality; there is, therefore, since there is a holy-ghost besides father and son, three Gods, but not *co-eternity* with the son. But the bible says there is one God, and, of course, but one, and a God that is not eternal, is no God; and if but one God, not three. Therefore trinitarianism is not true.

As a corollary, unitarianism is not; because it is evident that he who sends, is God; that he who is sent, is God; and that the holy spirit is God by induction, having an infinite work, and having omniscience ascribed. That he who sends, is God, none deny. That he who is sent, is God, is absolutely sure; because it is said, that "all the fullness of the godhead bodily dwelt in him." But if there be three Gods in the one Jehovah, Jove, or Jah, then there is more than one; therefore, unitarianism is not true, whatever sectarianism or sophistical reasoning may say.

Once more. Mormonism is not true; because the imposition just commenced is well known to be what it is. Lastly, all sects and denominations are in error and delusion; because the bible is a regularly-formed volume from the hand of man, and is subsequent in *date* and an *incarnate Deity* to the history of the world, and the worship of the Christ of India. But what are *ten thousand years* in one instance, and *fact* in the other? The world would believe in "witches" till science rendered it contemptible — the same with the bible, and no longer.

#### RELIGIOUS FAITH.

If the influence of example is greater than that of mere precept, the scriptures are very unfit to teach lessons of humanity. In these writings we are told, that, by the command of the Deity, the conquered nations of Canaan were exterminated by systematic massacres; that, by his command, the Israelites plunged their swords into the breasts of the aged, and butchered unresisting females and helpless children. This pretended command of the Deity, has been one of the causes of sanguinary religious persecutions. Religionists have inferred that the destruction of heretics is as gratifying to the Deity as the extermination of idolatrous Canaanites; and the scripture history of massacres, pretended to have been directed by divine authority, is adapted, in sanguinary, civil dissensions, to encourage the ferocity of fanatical partisans.

In considering the effect of religious faith on the moral character of an individual, it is of but little importance with what sect he is connected. The difference is but trifling, whether he trusts in the intercession of Christ, or in that of "our lady" and the saints; or whether he believes that an atrocious murderer can obtain heaven by the payment of a certain price, or by mere repentance. It is true, that protestants have generally been more enlightened and humane than the catholic sect; but we have no reason to conclude that their superiority, in these respects, is the result of their religious principles. It might as reasonably be argued, that the worship of Jupiter, Apollo, and Minerva, was peculiarly beneficial in its tendency, because the ancient Greeks had attained great eminence in literature, science, and the arts, while the Jews were comparatively a barbarous people; or it might as reasonably be pretended, that the religion of Mohamet had a powerful tendency to promote the advancement of knowledge, because the Arabians signalled themselves in the cultivation of literature and science, while all christian nations were immersed in the barbarism of the dark ages.

But let us suppose that the French had been a protestant nation, and that unbelief had been unknown among them throughout the revolution. Now, if, in that case, a protestant clergyman could have addressed a band of revolutionary fanatics, what is the strongest threatening that his religion could have afforded, in order to restrain their rage, and prevent them from slaughtering their opponents? Simply this: "If you commit the horrid crimes that you meditate, you will be destined to the torments of the damned—unless you should repent before death, and accept eternal happiness!" This is the great barrier which, our religionists suppose, would have restrained the fierce spirits of the revolution.

A believer of christianity should, at least, have sufficient philanthropy to wish that his religion were not true. Even if he believes that his own future happiness is secured, he should feel no enthusiasm for a religion which proclaims, as "glad tidings of great joy," that a few are elected to eternal happiness; but that the greater number of his departed relatives, friends, and fellow-beings, are now writhing in torments that are to have no end! It is true, an unbeliever is deprived of the visionary hope of happiness in a future state; but, to compensate for this, he perceives that the doctrine of endless punishment, inflicted for the sins of frail and erring man, is as absurd as it is execrable.

It is said, however, that religious impressions can never be entirely eradicated from the mind; but will excite terror in the unbeliever at the approach of death. But although many unbelievers have been unable to free themselves from superstitious doubts, and in some cases these doubts have produced strong religious impressions at the approach of death, yet these sick men's fancies are of but trifling importance. They result from the timidity and imbecility of mind, caused by disease; and from the usual influence of fear in exciting the imagination and blinding the judgment. Those unbelievers who are affected with superstitious fears at the approach of death, resemble certain individuals who perceive the absurdity of the tales of demons and apparitions, when their fears are not excited, but are unable to free themselves from superstitious terrors in the dark. But in numerous instances, unbelievers have met death with the utmost calmness. It is well known, for example, that, in the French revolution, many who had joined the opposition to religion, submitted themselves to execution with as much fortitude and apparent cheerfulness, as were ever exhibited by christian martyrs.

Even if the doctrine of a future state were true, the condition of the unbeliever would be as safe as that of the christian; for, to assert that an individual will be condemned to eternal torment, merely because he has committed an error of judgment or reason, is monstrously absurd. Yet it is commonly argued, that it is safest to believe, because the future happiness of the christian is secured, if his religion is true, but if it is false, his condition after death can be no worse than that of the unbeliever. But a mohammedan or pagan might as reasonably defend his religion by an argument of the same nature. The supposition that the Deity has revealed himself to mankind by supernatural means, is so extravagantly improbable, and the doctrine of the existence of the mind, when the bodily organisation is destroyed, is so utterly absurd, that the evidence for every popular religion is entirely disproved by the very nature of the supposed facts of revelation. Hence it appears that the evidences of christianity are of no greater importance than those of any pagan superstition.

There are many, however, who would conclude, that, whether christianity is well-founded or not, it is useless to oppose a system so firmly established. But the progress of truth, though gradual, is sure; and although the easiest method of overthrowing one system of superstition, is, generally, to introduce another, yet, judging from the past, those



who "compass sea and land" to make a few proselytes, will have much less success in propagating their religion abroad, than unbelievers will have in opposing it at home.

### MARTYRDOM.

THIS has long been held as a strong and substantial argument in favour of the truth of revealed religion. It is one to which the apostle appeals—"they were tempted, they were sawn asunder;" and to which we have almost every sabbath frequent allusions. We shall give a few important reasons why it is neither conclusive, nor in any way satisfactory, and then point out what kind of evidence we have a right to demand.

By martyrdom, is meant death, in testifying to the truth, and, literally, victory or dominion in testifying. A martyr is one, who, sure of triumph, when he might escape, seals his testimony, to what he believes to be religious truth, God's teaching, with his blood, for the sake of the truth and of God. The first objection to such evidence is, that individuals of directly opposite faith and of different religions, have thus been put to death. This, every one at all acquainted with ecclesiastical and profane history, well knows to be the case. Pious catholics have suffered death at the hands of protestants, rather than renounce those doctrines for the denying of which pious protestants have, when in the hands of catholics, been put to death. Either, on recanting and abjuring those doctrines, could have escaped; but they would not, and sealed their faith in them with their blood. But both could not be true; and when the evidence is thus equally balanced, what can we believe?

Again. It is the same with the Jew and the christian, the brahmin and mohammedan. They have each, in turn, suffered and inflicted martyrdom. The Jew denies Christ altogether; the mohammedan worships an impostor, deominated a false prophet, "a star called wormwood;" and the Hindoo, Chrishna, who existed before the Trojan war. Of course, as two out of three must be wrong, and as each presents the same evidence, lays down his life, such testimony is not conclusive, nor in the least satisfactory. It convinces us of but one thing—that such were sincere in their testimony.

A second reason is, because the influence of a creed, a system of religious faith, or even a persuasion of what is an untruth, may be as strong upon the mind in determining the will, purpose, resolve, as that which is true. This follows as a co-relative truth to the former position, did we admit the christian religion and any one important controverted doctrine, on the ground of life or death, to be true. Catholics and protestants have equally braved death; so have Jews and mohammedans. The followers of Sir Walter Raleigh went with as much confidence to seek out El Dorado, a city which never existed, as did those of Cortez in advancing towards Mexico. Men have a thousand times been assured that, by wheels and springs put in action, they could gain momentum, and thus invent perpetual motion, and not a few sacrificed property, health, and life.

A third and last reason is, that the confidence, firmness, and resolve of a martyr, and, if you will, his joy, happiness, triumph, and glory, are purely electric effects. If he is alone among enemies, and all hope of escape cut off, and he has to suffer, he may or may not, according to his constitution. If he have the peculiar constitution, he meets death firmly and undismayed, and dies testifying to the truth, and becomes famous; if not, he is forgotten, and his name and memory blotted out. It is not uncommon to find in warfare the veriest coward, in the desperate struggle, performing prodigies of valour. If the martyr be surrounded by his fellows, they,

by determinate volition, throw into his system and the organs of his brain the electric materia, which deprives of sensation to pain, and fills with strength, hope, and joy.

Now, since this is the case, who can rely on such evidence? If the same amount meets us on the side of what is known to be error and a lie, sincerely believed in as truth, as on the side of that which is assumed and hoped to be truth—and if martyrs can thus be sustained alone or with their fellows, then surely we must pronounce the argument drawn from martyrdom inconclusive and entirely unsatisfactory. This is taking the argument on the most favourable ground, and supposing things to be exactly as represented—whereas, we have, in martyrology, to remember that the accounts have been written by individuals favouring the cause, and that one addition after another has been made, till, what was at first a plain story, has become stamped with the wonderful and miraculous.

We did not deem it necessary to attempt a statement and an invalidation of the arguments of Paley. That it may, however, be seen upon how slender a ground he rests the argument founded on martyrdom, we will, before proceeding to our second object, do so. He says, "That there is satisfactory evidence that many, professing to be original witnesses of the christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts — and that they also submitted from the same motives to new rules of conduct." "That there is *not* satisfactory evidence that persons pretending to be the original witnesses of any other similar miracles, have acted in the same manner in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief in the truth of those accounts."

Brahmins submit from the same motives to new rules of conduct; besides, if it were not so, how came the religion of Chrishna—which Sir William Jones affirms to be identically the same story as that of Christ of Palestine, and which existed at least as far back as the Trojan war—established throughout the East? Did not this paternal, filial, triune worship have the same objects to contend with? Think you that there was no martyrdom? The fact is, we reason in regard to the history of man, the same as we did before the existence of geologic science of the history of the earth. It was then a six days' creation. It is now "periods of vast duration." Have not mohammedans testified to the sufferings and miracles of their prophet, and sealed it with their blood? Were Joseph Smith put to death to-day, think you not that some would die martyrs, and that a century or five hundred years hence we should not have their names blazoned forth and their memories embalmed? The great difficulty is, that the arguments of Paley, Watson, Lardner, and all evidence-writers, "beg the question," and then are on the *presumption conclusive*! The great mass of the people, destitute of science and the art of reasoning, are incapable of judging, and are deceived. Reason, and the characters of those who present the truth in its broad foundation and sun-like aspect, are traduced; and evidence-writers, with their weak, puerile, and contemptible arguments, carry the day.

We come now to the argument, or rather evidence, we are authorised to require in regard to the truth of revealed religion. It is a *personal revelation of Jehovah himself to each individual, testifying that it is true*. Man is false. The best may be self-deceived. All that is affirmed, after all, is only traditional; or if written, as said to be, disputed by the highest and most respectable authority. All the writings of the new testament, and every important doctrine, is of this character. They are evidently the writings of men who lived after the Greek language had fallen into the hands, not of ignorant men,

but comparatively finished scholars. The four evangelists, on which all depends, "now admitted to be copies of an Egyptian gospel," have evidently received a secondary polishing, being at this very moment, while professedly a translation from the original Greek, in the idiom almost of pure English. We want not a *say-so*. Miracles are reduced to the same level: it is only this and that man *says so*, or is said to have said so.

Now, if it was universally testified from heaven to every man, woman, or child in a clear, distinct voice, and in a personal exhibition of an angel from, that the history and religion of Jesus Christ is true, it would be the very and the only evidence which would be conclusive and satisfactory. It would admit of no doubt. And is not the subject worthy of such testimony? If Jesus were indeed the Son of God, would it not be a work worthy of angels? But no, God has devised this plan, and—"he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned!" The priests have devised it, and it is thus that they carry it out in deceiving the people and many of them themselves. We demand higher authority and more conclusive argument, and have a right to do so. We fear not the consequences. The christian argument is subverted and yielding on all hands, and stands now only in sentiment to an entire rejection of *argument or proof*.

#### EVE AND THE SERPENT.

It is, indeed, a matter of surprise, that a being so perfect as man—the workmanship of omnipotence and wisdom, that had infused into him a portion of his own divine essence, and pronounced the work superlatively good—should have been so easily deceived by a reptile. Nothing can reconcile the absurdity but a *quantum sufficit* of that grace, which, christians tell us, is the gift of heaven, but which, it would seem, God has learned, from the abuse of his liberality to Adam and Eve, to keep entirely under his own charge, that he may have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and consign to everlasting perdition such as he pleases—and that, not for any good or evil that they are capable of performing, but to display his ineffable, incomprehensible, and mysterious workings among the sons of men.

Some, with the view of endeavouring to reconcile the palpable absurdity of a serpent possessing powers of argument sufficient to overcome the scruples of Eve, have resorted to the plea of female weakness. But, supposing that the first woman, notwithstanding what is said about the perfection of her nature, was the weaker vessel, why, we would ask, was she exposed alone to the wiles of the most cunning beast which Deity had thought proper to make? Would it not have been more consistent with justice to have placed some assistant or agent to afford succour, in case of need, to an ignorant, weak woman? She had no experience to guide her as to the course she should pursue in relation to the objects with which she was surrounded. According to the christian theology, the everlasting salvation of all future generations depended on the part she had to act. Was it not, then, the incumbent duty of the being who placed her in a situation of such tremendous responsibility, either to arm her sufficiently to withstand the assault, or allot her a guard of superior agents? But nothing of the kind was done. This poor, feeble creature, entirely unacquainted with the existence of animals more cunning than herself, was left alone to fall a victim to their subtlety. Even her husband, her natural guardian, helpmate, and protector, was purposely kept out of the way, that her defeat might be the more certain.

We think we hear the voice of fanaticism exclaim, "The

woman ought to have been more careful. She should not have violated the law which said, 'The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' " This law, however, according to bible history, was enacted *before* Eve had a being, and it does not appear that she was ever told of it either by God or by her husband. But, admitting she had known of its existence, what idea could she have of the words to "die?" If a natural death was meant, how could this inexperienced female, who, as yet, had never seen a dead body, either of man or beast—no, not a dead flower, and had not, with her eyes or mind, even perceived the image of death as presented in sleep—how, we ask, could such an one have any knowledge of what was intended by the threat of death as a punishment for eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge? But the result showed, that it was not a natural death that was threatened—but a spiritual, eternal death. If, then, Eve could form no conception of the meaning of the word death, supposing it temporal death, how could she know anything of a doctrine which God did not think fit to reveal (admitting, for the sake of argument, he did reveal it) till after all the people who had lived on the earth for 4000 years were laid in their graves? and which, even with all the pains that Deity itself has taken, since then, to make generally known, is not at this day admitted but by a small portion of the human race—and even among those who say they believe it, there is not one to be found who can explain it to others, or, who understands it himself.

#### HEAR BOTH SIDES!

MANY christians at the present day, delight in representing the enmity which they suppose we infidels entertain towards the bible. To read their writings, one would suppose that we were afraid of that book, and that our object in opposing it was to abolish it from society, lest the people should discover in it some truths worth preserving. Now we have no such thoughts; and as for suppressing the book, we would not have it done on any account. On the contrary, we wish its circulation were trebled, believing that wherever it is read, understandingly, it will carry with it its own antidote. At the same time, whatever truth it may teach, we will as cordially acknowledge and as zealously maintain, as the strictest orthodox in the land. Can any one do more?

We are perfectly willing to give to the bible all the credit that appears consistent with reason and probability due to it; and moreover, to the characters of the men therein exhibited. If we can learn any thing that will direct us in the ways of truth, virtue, and happiness, from their virtues or their vices, it is thus far so good. If we can learn any thing to the same end from the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ (whether such personage ever existed or not, is immaterial), his mission in this world may thus far be beneficial to man, and, as we conceive, no farther. It is from the consequences of systems and things alone, that we can judge of their propriety or usefulness. In appealing to this criterion, ought we not to confine the view within the sense of our knowledge, which of course would limit it to the present state of existence? All beyond is conjecture and uncertainty.

The fact is, when we leave known truths, and reality, we can have no permanent standard nor bounds. All systematical religions and creeds, of whatever name and nature, are evidently the fabrications of weak, imperfect man; and as for the favours of an overruling providence (supposing the existence of such a power), they are equally bestowed on all the human family, without any regard to the form or theory of religion they profess. The effects or consequences of all human institutions, and all the acts of mankind, are



limited exclusively to created or perishable things, and fall infinitely short of irritating or disturbing the almighty. We may see in every land, and learn it from history to have been the case in all past ages of the world, that the inhabitants of every country feel and suffer the consequences of their own management, whether it be wise or foolish. But the dispensations of providence, or nature, or whatever you please to call it, are all uniform, and the same in regard to all nations, ages, and religions. The sun shines, the rain descends, the seasons follow in their turn, and the earth brings forth her fruits, equally unto all that use equal means under equal circumstances, without the least variation, in regard to their religion or form of government. However strange these ideas may appear to some, we think we have the present, and the history of all past, ages, to confirm the truth of the position.

### SOCIALIST BOOKS AND SOCIALIST DOCTRINE.

*To the Editor of the Investigator.*

SIR.—Whether it be from obtusity of intellect or any other cause, certain it is that I remain of the same opinion now as when I read your first article upon the above subject. This may appear strange, but it is, nevertheless, true. You know me too well to suspect me of any factious motives, and will readily believe that my opposition to your views proceeds from naught else but an opinion of their incorrectness. In this discussion, as in every other, since, at least, I perceived the truths of socialism, I am only anxious to arrive at truth, quite indifferent on which side it might be—and desirous by no means of obtaining a victory. I was much grieved, a few days after the appearance of your article in No. 5, to hear that an individual in the town in which I reside, one belonging to the whole-Owen party, but withal a great admirer of you previously, had declared he would no longer purchase the INVESTIGATOR, on account of your attack upon the formation of character clause. There is in such conduct from such men an intolerance more gross than that practised by the old-world-mongers. If a man will advocate received opinions—if he will support pet prejudices—if he will swear that what he conceives to be black is not black, but the colour which the majority say it is—in a word, if he will have no opinion of his own, but is content to be guided by others, and to advocate just what others wish him, gaining thereby not “golden opinions” alone, but golden ingots to boot—why, if he can do this, and for the sake of gain, he must be a very ass to court the sweet voices of pseudo-liberals, whether socialists, deists, or atheists, with a view to obtain either worldly honour or wealth. When in the world’s history were the advancing party, the reformers, or would be reformers, so well *able*, or so *willing*, to reward either honesty or dishonesty, as the men who are “satisfied with things as they are,” the better-to-be-safe men? Neither is it very probable advancing parties ever will be, for the fact of their being in advance of their fellows, is sufficient to indicate that they are in the minority, and that considerably. All errors are fetters of the mind, if they do not also fetter the body—the man who discovers a truth and promulgates it, shows a desire to liberate mankind from some mental or physical bondage under which they have been labouring. The socialists profess to have discovered the harmlessness of truth. They say, that if it be taken in ever so great quantity, it will not produce the slightest injury to the individual or to the body politic—but that, on the contrary, the most infinitesimal small portion of falsehood will work incalculable harm. They say, that, for men and women *really* to be men and women, they must be

conceived in truth, born in truth, shapen in truth, fed upon truth, and be clothed in truth, as with a mantle—and that just in proportion as these indispensable requisites are departed from, will be the departure from their true nature, and the substitution of a false and injurious one. This is what socialism has taught me. Truth, in the mental or ideal world, is like Spinoza’s *substantia*, to the physical or corporeal world—the all-embracing unity, the one. Socialism, though advocated by a party, is not a limited system, it is universal in principle and application. If the present socialists embrace errors, the errors belong not to socialism, but to its mistaken advocates. Its professors *profess* to be the friends of unlimited freedom of expression, and the courtiers and promoters of discussion, upon any and every subject, but there are a large, very large, number of the present so-called rationalists who are the direst foes to freedom of discussion, though its nominal advocates. Whilst vehemently denouncing the numerous enemies of their principles, for their unscrupulous warfare upon them, the rationalists themselves, with disgusting inconsistency, are ready, at a moment’s notice, to turn upon any of their own party who may venture to differ from them, as they have previously differed from the world. Instead of calmly examining arguments, they endeavour to stifle their utterance, by depriving their advocate of the means of giving them publicity. This is the object and wish of every one who refuses to support an individual or a publication, because the one or the other ventures to differ from him upon some portion of the principles he *patronises*—I cannot say, the principles he believes to be true, for no men wilfully embrace error, and would gladly be rid of it but for prejudice, but having once embraced an error, they consider it their duty to protect it, upon the same principle that they would feel themselves called upon to stand up in the defence of an orphan child, which they had adopted, however ill-favoured. I hope, however, that the instance I have mentioned of rationalist intolerance and persecution is the only one in relation to this discussion. Instead of endeavouring to suppress, every honest man would encourage, the expression of opposite opinions to his own. Hoping your readers will pardon this digression, I will proceed with my subject.

You are quite right, in your reply to me, in No. 13, to say that I did not understand your meaning, when you said “the character of man is formed for *and* by him”—nay, more, you are quite right when you say that I quite *mis*-understood you. I cannot help thinking that your meaning was never rightly understood by your readers, previous to the appearance of your reply to my letter—at least, I never before perceived it, and my opportunities of arriving at a correct knowledge of your opinions have not been few—so that this discussion will not be entirely useless, whatever may be the final result.

You say that error is “ramified and re-ramified through every line” of my letter. I am sorry that I should have inflicted upon your readers so egregious a blunder, as my letter would appear to be. I think, however, that a little trouble will suffice to show, that if I misunderstood you, that you have equally misunderstood me—and that, though my letter, with the explanation you have *since* given of your meaning, is any thing but a refutation of your position, yet, with the interpretation I put upon your words, and in which I have reason to believe I was by no means singular, the arguments contained in that letter were not so wide of the mark as you would seem to think. I understood you to allude to acts of volition, and not to involuntary, or to chemical, action. With this view I endeavoured to establish that all mental phenomena, resulting in physical action, was determined by the nature or condition of the organisation which gave them birth, and that the character of an organisation subsequent to birth, must entirely depend upon the nature of the organisation at

birth, at which period I assumed no volition had been exercised—and to this you assented.

You accuse me of mixing-up propositions “having nothing in common”—which propositions are, first, that man is the creature of circumstances—second, that his character is formed for him and not by him. Now, sir, I never considered these *two* propositions, nor do I now, but now, as ever, think them one and the same thing. I have always thought, that to say “man is the creature of circumstances,” was precisely the same as saying that “his character is formed for him and not by him”—and when I said, “man’s character is formed for him, and not by him,” I understood and intended to convey, that he was “the creature of circumstances”—and this I consider to be the fundamental, or foundational, principle of the science of humanity or socialism. In your opinion, however, to say that man is the creature of circumstances, or of an invincible necessity, is perfectly true, perfectly rational—but to say, at the same time, that his character is formed for him and not by him, is as perfectly false, and as perfectly irrational.

I am compelled to think, at present, that you make a *distinction* without a *difference*. Robert Owen says, that man is acted upon by society, and that man re-acts upon society, but that, considered in the total, man’s character is formed for him and not by him—or, that he is the creature of circumstances, or invincible necessity. You say, that man is acted upon by society and that he re-acts upon society—that his character is formed for him and by him, and yet, that he is the creature of circumstances or of invincible necessity. Where the difference exists between you, I cannot perceive. If it be grossly inconsistent and absurd to say that the character of man is formed for him and not by him, because man plays an involuntary, or necessitated, part in the formation of his own character—surely it is equally inconsistent to say that man is the result of an invincible necessity, yet that his character is formed for him and by him.

I can perfectly understand what you would wish to convey by your paradoxical reading, but think it as inconsistent in fact as it is in appearance. According to your theory, it is impossible to conceive a period when an animal *first* began to take part in the formation of its character—for although the peculiar organs and general appearance of the animal may not be developed in the ova, while in the ovarum of the female, and before impregnation, still the germs of the organs are there, and are, of course, as much the animal as at any subsequent period. But we can easily conceive a time when the particles which compose any particular ova, formed a part of other animals or plants, and even when they were in a gaseous state. Following out this argument *ad infinitum*, matter being eternally existent, we can imagine the particles composing a particular organisation to have been eternally tending to the formation of such organisation—thus, the animal has eternally existed, and has been eternally playing a part in the formation of its character. Further, according to your theory, organisations not only play a part in the *formation* of their characters from all eternity, and before they were instinct with life, and were capable of volition—but they also play a part in the *destruction* of those characters, when life is extinct and the phenomenon of death is exhibited. The same invincible necessity which impelled the particles to the formation of an organisation, also impels them to the destruction of the organisation. Hence, if the necessitated action of the particles in the formation of an animal, was the action of the animal, even before it was capable of volition—so must the action of the particles in the decomposition of an animal, be the action of the animal, when it is no longer capable of volition. This argument might be carried out to much greater length than your space will permit or my time warrant, and I, therefore, strive to be brief. If I convey my meaning to you

and to my readers, I shall be satisfied. You have no more right to begin with the foetus in the uterus, as the time when an animal first begins to take part in the formation of its character, than you have with the ova before impregnation, nor then more than when it formed a part of other animals or plants—in fact, I know not that you could name any time when an animal first began to form its character, and yet, as its character is partly formed *by* it, it must have commenced some time. The foetus is acted upon by the uterus, and, in return re-acts upon it—and this re-action, though involuntary and necessitated, you denominate the action of the organism. Now the action of the particles forming the foetus being necessitated, and their action during their previous states of existence, while tending to the formation of the foetus, being necessitated also, the arguments which apply to the foetus will also apply to the particles composing it, at any period previous. If the involuntary action of the foetus be the action of the man—then the involuntary action of the particles composing the foetus, at any period previous to their assuming that form, was also the actions of the man—for whatever forms they might have taken anterior to the formation of the foetus, or in whatever way they may have been combined or mixed up with other matter—such anterior forms, combinations, or conditions were as necessary to the subsequent formation of the foetus, as was the formation of the foetus necessary to the subsequent development of the man. From the above premises I think it follows, that the particles forming present organisations having existed from all eternity, such organisations, or the particles composing such organisations, must have played a part in the formation of their present characters at the most remote period of which we have any conception, or of which we have no conception, equally with the present period of their existence. But, inasmuch as matter has ever existed, its properties, modes, or attributes, that is, its character, was neither formed for it nor by it. If it be true of the whole, to say it ever has existed, it ever must exist, it exists *per se*, existence is its essential attribute—if it be true to say, matter has ever been in motion, must ever be in motion, motion is an essential property of its being—also, if it be true, that the motion or direction of each individual particle is not determined by the particle itself, but is a necessary consequence of its existence—then, supposing these premises to be true, I consider it incorrect to say of any *portion* of the whole that its character is formed for it and by it, whilst we deny that the character of the whole was either formed for it or by it.

To this you may object—that if it be true that no portion of the whole can have done aught, in philosophical strictness, to form its character, seeing that the whole cannot be otherwise than it is, and never could have been otherwise than it was—then it must also be incorrect to say of a portion, that its character is formed *for* it, for what is true of a part must be true of the whole, and the whole was not formed, but exists *per se*. This I readily admit—for man must clearly be a creature of necessity, seeing that he is a portion of the universe, which is a thing of necessity. But now comes the question between us.

Men’s actions are sometimes so strange, so unaccountable, and determined by causes so remote, or so exclusively pertaining to the organisations exhibiting them, that mankind have generally entertained the opinion that man possessed a power independent of circumstances, and uncontrolled by necessity, which enabled him to act or not to act irrespective of external circumstances—that, in fact, man possessed a free power to act or not to act without reference to previous causes or future consequences. Men have ever made a distinction between the voluntary or determined actions of individuals, and those acts resulting from feelings which are the necessary



accompaniments of existence. Thus, they have considered it natural, or unavoidable, to feel anger when unjustly treated—but unnatural, or, avoidable, to unjustly treat. They have considered anger, in the first case, a necessary consequence, and cruelty, in the second case, as wilful. But those who know man's real nature, are certain that the cruel man is as much compelled to act cruelly, as is the object of his cruelty compelled to feel annoyed at such action. They are certain that cruelty is as much the result of an invincible necessity as benevolence, and that in neither case could the exhibitors of such opposite feelings act differently. Hence they have declared that the character of every individual is formed for him—that he is compelled to have the feelings and inclinations which he possesses, and that he has no power of himself to change his character.

Upon this view of the case, I am inclined to think it correct to say, man's character is formed for him—for the character of which we speak is of limited existence, commencing, however, with the earliest evidence of being—beyond which period I have never conceived it worth tracing. I cannot but express my regret now, as I did in my first letter, that it has not fallen into more able hands to state the case and maintain it.

I object to *your* definition of "circumstance," because it is not my definition. I used the term in the sense of "a state of being, a condition," which I believe you will find as philosophically correct as your own interpretation. To use the word, however, without an explanation, was wrong.

I never intended to convey, that *you* ever "Fell out with, or refused to aid, any party, 'because of the unphilosophical wording of a sentence.'" I alluded to the "hundreds and thousands," named in your first article, to whom the assertion that man's character is formed for him and not by him, has proved "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." I knew you too well to charge you with such conduct.

W. CHILTON.

## QUERIES.

If, in the beginning, God created man in his own perfect image, *holy*, how came that man, so like his God, to commit sin?

Was it not necessary that man should be created with a sinful nature, and was he not obliged to sin, in order that the after-plot, the death and sufferings of the saviour, might be brought out?

Was it not necessary, in order to the advent of the Son of God that the eternal father should create a human being (Judas Iscariot) on purpose to damn him?

Did not God become the author of sin, when he created the *Devil*?

Where did the Devil come from? We never heard any thing of him until we find him in the form of a serpent tempting our first parents!

Where did the serpent that tempted Eve learn to talk? We never heard of but that one serpent that had the gift of speech!

## SOME CURIOUS OPINIONS,

DRAWN FROM THE WRITINGS OF DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS.

The Deity of the Hebrews was evidently considered, by the polytheists, to be the divine power of the material heavens.—*Hibbert*.

Atheism is adapted only for the *savans* (learned).—*La Place*.

Nothing was more obnoxious to all their (christian priests) enterprises, than the pagan philosophers as well as historians, and the good sense contained in their works. Knowledge is the bane of priestcraft—which made some prelates, as soon as it was in their power, behave themselves against all human literature, and everything belonging to arts and sciences, with an uncommon rage. The inveteracy of Gregory the Great against learning and paganism was so excessive, that he not only was angry with an archbishop of Vienna for suffering grammar to be taught in his diocese, but studied to write bad Latin himself—and in one of his letters boasted, that he scorned to conform to the rules of grammar, not in anything to resemble a heathen. In pursuance of this refined policy, the clergy has refused to recede an inch from what had been gained on the credulity of the laymen—and whoever attempted to undeceive the people, was always looked upon as a false brother, and rendered odious to the world.—*Mandeville*.

The dogma of a future life, and of the soul's immortality, was invented by politicians.—*Pomponatius*.

Miracles were invented by princes for the benefit of their subjects.—*Machiavelli*.

Religion is a sublime invention.—*Linguet*.

The people must have a religion.—*Lemaire*.

The practice of superstition is so congenial with the multitude, that if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision.—*Gibbon*.

Speculative atheists are those unhappy people, who being too fond of knowledge or reasoning, are first deluded into scepticism, till unable to extricate themselves from the mazes of philosophy they are at last betrayed into a disbelief of everything they cannot comprehend, and become the most convincing evidence of the shallowness of human understanding. The number of these has always been very small, and as they are commonly studious peaceable men, the hurt they do the public is inconsiderable.—*Mandeville*.

Bishop Butler says: "Reason can and ought to judge, not only of the meaning, but also of the *morality*, and evidence of revelation.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

## THIRD BULLETIN FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

### ARREST OF PATERSON.

Edinburgh, August 3rd, 1843.

THE "Edinburgh Courant" of this evening has the following:

BLASPHEMOUS PUBLICATIONS.—Since the late trial before the high court of justiciary, for the sale of blasphemous publications, which was delayed in consequence of a technical flaw in the indictment—a man named Paterson has come down from London and opened another shop for their sale, with more open defiance to the authorities than before. Paterson, we understand, is the person, the windows of whose shop in London were broken by Mr. Knight Bruce, in indignation at the outrageous insults heaped upon christianity by the books he exposed for sale. His conduct here is of a piece with his proceedings in London. Not satisfied with the blasphemy openly exposed in his shop, he has placarded the streets with bills, and even employed men to carry them about on boards, stating, among other things, "The bible, and other obscene books, not sold." We submit that this is a palpable violation of all the limits of fair discussion, and such as would unite the community as one man in an attempt to abate the nuisance. The superintendent of police has very properly been stretching the powers vested in him to the utmost, by suppressing the placards in the streets, and taking all engaged in circulating them into custody; but it is obvious, that unless the highest authorities of the country interfere, the community are liable at every turn to have their dearest feelings outraged.

I am spared much trouble by this paragraph. It speaks volumes. Nothing can be more amusing, and, at the same time, instructive. We learn therefrom that "the Man Paterson" is lionising in first-rate style, erecting his mane, lashing his sides, and roaring magnificently. Van Amburgh, the brute-tamer, who entered the city a fortnight since, with eight cream-coloured nags attached to his carriage, has not excited such general interest as Paterson, the bigot-tamer, who rode in upon that least costly of animals, vulgarly called "shanks mare." Verily, this is astounding, but undeniable as astounding. The whole city is in an uproar, very similar to that which it is said prevailed at Ephesus, when the goddess-manufacturers feared to lose the craft by which they lived. Indeed, I much fear that if Paterson do not speedily whisk into gaol, or out of the city, that some additional madhouses must be erected *toute suite*, for the benefit of poor christians whose brains are being so awfully excited. When the Edinburgh Courant tells his readers that Paterson is selling blasphemy, with more open defiance to the authorities than ever was exhibited before, he but feebly expresses the alarming truth. I really cannot, however, forbear laughing, when I think of the odd sights, sayings, and doings, the last few days have given birth to. On Friday last, Paterson took possession of a shop in West Register-street—on Saturday he had it fitted up in comfortable style—on Monday he opened it, and, in addition, plastered the city walls with placards thus worded:

*Under the Patronage of the Procurator-Fiscal.  
PATERSON AND CO.  
(Of the Blasphemy Dépôt, London)*

Beg to acquaint infidels in general, and christians in particular, that, in consequence of the immense demand for blasphemous works—the procurator-fiscal himself, having taken some hundreds of volumes from another shop in this city—they have, with a view to furnish the public with an ample supply, opened a dépôt, at 38, WEST REGISTER-STREET.

PATERSON and Co. will sell all kinds of printed works, which are calculated to enlighten, without corrupting—to bring into contempt the demoralising trash our priests palm upon the credulous as divine revelation—and to expose the absurdity of, as well as horrible effects springing from, the *debasement of god idea!*

As the present brisk demand for printed works of the above-mentioned character, has been caused chiefly, if not altogether, by the procurator-fiscal's anxiety to become possessed of a large number of such invaluable productions, and as that functionary is doubtless eager to obtain more, Paterson and Company beg most respectfully to inform him, the following is a list of some of the works now on sale:

"The Bible, an improper book for youth, and dangerous to the easily-excited brain—with immoral and contradictory passages therefrom." By Allah. *Oracle of Reason* (atheistical). *Investigator* (atheistical). "God versus Paterson," the extraordinary Bow-street police report. "Good Sense," the book of books. "Great Dragon Cast Out," a splendid satire on Milton's *Paradise Lost*. *New Moral World*. "Existence of Christ Disproved." By a German Jew. Also the works of Mirabaud, Volney, Hume, Paine, Shelley, Robert Dale Owen, Frances Wright, Haslam, Strauss, Carlile, and other authors of reputation.

Also, just published, "The Defence of Thomas Finlay," who was charged before the High Court of Justiciary, on the 24th of July, with vending blasphemous works.

*The Bible, and other obscene works, not sold at this shop.*

What the procurator-fiscal thought of his name being thus taken in vain, may easily be conceived, but not so easily expressed. That functionary must surely be in a worse plight than was the sleepy-headed provost of this city, who, upon the occasion of her majesty's late visit, was found snoring in bed, when he ought to have been,

On gracefully bent knee,  
Exhibiting his loyalty.

I am not superstitious, or I should conclude that destiny is playing cruel pranks with Edinburgh's great men. Only think of the provost being in the arms of Morpheus, when he *should* have been doing the amiably-loyal to queen Victoria. Only think of Duncan McNeill, her majesty's advocate, drawing up, or causing to be drawn up, indictments against Messrs. Robinson and Finlay, with flaws in the bodies thereof, numerous as patches in a harlequin's jacket. Only think, too, thinking reader, what a complete mull the procurator-fiscal has made. Three mulls (so boys say at school) are as good as a spin, but that sapient functionary has contrived to make just two mulls, which are not equal to the phantom of a spin. Mull the first, was meddling with Robinson and Finlay; mull the second, not doing it effectually. By this mulling the fiscal has brought the Man Paterson upon him, but when he will



get him off again, the lord only knows. The Old Man of the Sea did not stick closer to Sinbad's galled shoulders, than will the Young Man Paterson to the sore tail of his patron the fiscal. The latter, I firmly believe, was innocent of any intention to patronise Paterson, or establish an atheistical tract depôt in this city—but innocent as his intention may have been, he is really guilty of doing both. It is well known that Paterson has come down from London and opened a shop for the sale of rank blasphemy, just because the fiscal thought proper to interfere with Robinson and Finlay. "Where the carcasses are, there will the eagles be gathered together," and the corrupt carcase of persecution being here, why the Man Paterson, eagle-like, has come to have a peck at it. The Edinburgh Courant says, that "Unless the highest authorities of the country interfere, the community are liable at every turn to have their dearest feelings outraged," and I say, that unless authorities, lowest as well as highest, mind their proper business, and cease to interfere in such matters at all, the "dearest feelings of the community" will be outraged far more than they yet have been. The simpleton who penned that stuff is one of the many millions who judge of all feelings by the puny measure of their own, and are sure that what afflicts their morbid sensibilities, must needs be repugnant to others, which is very like the wisdom of a man whose diseased limbs being agonised by a touch, should conclude that every body else's limbs are in an equally unfortunate condition. This writer for the Courant is an excellent sample of christians, taken by the sack. He "submits" that Paterson's placard is "a palpable violation of all the limits of fair discussion," by which I understand him to mean, Paterson may print what he pleases, if he will only take care not to print what displeases him, the scribe for the Courant. The worst of it is, the limits of fair discussion are the most uncertain limits in the world. That the superintendent of police has been stretching his powers, and his limbs too, in the orthodox work of suppressing, that is, tearing down, the placards, is perfectly true. Ever since Paterson unmasked his atheistical battery, the police have been incessantly employed in the glorious work. As to the shop itself, great is the respect which has been paid to it. Some have threatened to play torch and dagger parts, and set fire to it—others have valorously entered on purpose to tear, or order, down bills—while some have marched in to *curse*, and remained to *pay*. The procurator-fiscal's clerk, a man of little less importance than the procurator-fiscal himself, is satisfied that Paterson is *daft*. The short is, all sorts of opinions are afloat, and all sorts of doings done. The oldest inhabitant cannot remember the day when policemen and other authorities so tremendously exerted themselves. Affairs here at this moment may well be considered by the orthodox as typical of *hell broke loose*. Bill-stickers arrested here, bills unstuck there, bills about to be stuck somewhere else, magistrates and policemen looking after Paterson, and Paterson looking after magistrates and policemen, the confusion of confused opinions enunciated as well outside as inside the immortal shop, all contribute to produce a very pretty spectacle, a *coup d'œil*, as our neighbours style it, imposing, if not splendid. Jesting apart, there has not been so much excitement in this city for many years, as Paterson's doings have given birth to. The upshot of them I cannot pretend to tell, without my divining rod. So very uneasy are the authorities, that even the socialists, who issue nothing savouring of heterodoxy, cannot keep a bill upon the city walls. Yesterday, some bills, announcing that I would, on Sunday next, lecture on "The Folly of Praying," which they had caused to be posted, were immediately torn down by the police, who nailed many nails while thus helping the lord. A more orthodox bill can hardly be framed than the one alluded

to, but "the Man Paterson" has thrown the army of Christ into such a terrific rage, that they can no longer see the difference between a bill purely christian, and its fellow bill purely infidel. Poor devils, they seem no less bewildered than if the lord had *turned the world upside down*, that christians *might make bread of it*, as Highland robbers, upon certain occasions, were wont to pray that he would do. One thing is clear, Paterson is a made man, so far as reputation goes. No power on earth, in the earth, or out thereof, can strip him of that, *such as it is*. A report was rife this morning, that a warrant had been issued for his apprehension, but it is now almost sunset, and about the warrant nothing more has been heard. Paterson thinks no such luck is in store for him. Some who are reputed to scrape acquaintance with state mysteries, confidently say that the authorities communicated with Sir James Graham about prosecuting Paterson, and that the home-secretary has put his *néb* upon the affair. This is mere rumour, and as such I give it, inclining, nevertheless, to the opinion, that the government is convinced of the futility, and therefore folly, of attempting to suppress opinions by persecuting those who promulge them. With respect to the position of Messrs. Robinson and Finlay, I will now freely express my opinion.

There are victories which confer no honour upon, and are rather disadvantageous than otherwise to the victors. Just such a victory has been achieved by Messrs. Robinson and Finlay, who have vanquished Scotland's lord advocate, without the opportunity being vouchsafed them to strengthen or establish any useful principle, and certainly without profiting the cause for which they are battling. Finlay was not brought to trial at all—he expected to have been tried with Robinson, on Monday the 24th ult., but as the indictment of the latter, at least a considerable portion of it, was irrelevantly laid, his advocateship was constrained to abandon it, and as Finlay's indictment was framed in a manner equally objectionable, of course the crown officer did not proceed with his case, when Robinson's was disposed of. There never was, perhaps, a more stupidly concocted pair of indictments, than the precious couple in question. Though I am not on *very friendly terms* with the lord advocate, his half-angry and wholly contemptible appearance, while his indictment was being torn to shreds by Robinson's counsel, excited my pity. But help laughing outright I could not, when the judges declared count after count "irrelevantly laid," for his advocateship's countenance assumed all the tints of the rainbow, not, to be sure, at one and the same time, but in a kind of logical sequence. Some authors have described to us the *natural looks of poor souls in purgatory*—and very like such looks were those of her majesty's advocate, while his indictment was so cruelly mangled. The whole affair was ludicrously sublime, so that when listening to his piteous, yet petulant, humble, yet scarce one degree from insolent, protestation against the judges' opinion, I was kept in a state of "perpetual virtual" oscillation, between mirth and sorrow, passing almost with the rapidity of lightning from lively sympathy to deadly disgust. Undoubtedly one effect of this trial will be to sink his advocateship's legal reputation fifty fathom deep, at least, for it is admitted on every hand, that of all blundering indictment-framers, none can come within a mile of that functionary, except it be his *factotum*, Mr. Urquhart. The reasons which induced, or rather constrained, these two indictment-botehers to delay their intended victimisation, may be gathered from the subjoined report of what took place in the high court of judicatory, upon the occasion in question:

Robinson, who stood charged with the circulation and publication of opinionous deemed blasphemous and obscene, pleaded not guilty—whereupon Mr. Alexander McNeile, who conducted his case, having agreed to dispense with the reading

of the indictment, rose to state some objections to its relevancy, and said he knew that even, if all the objections he had to offer were sustained, enough of charges would remain unimpeached, amply sufficient to allow the indictment to go to proof. He thought it his duty, considering the nature of the case, to state those objections, in order that the court might be able to lay down some rule upon the point. He had no objection to urge with reference to the relevancy of the major proposition, on which he thought no question could be entertained. But he meant to call their attention to the question as to whether the propositions in the minor portion of the indictment were properly set forth. The first objection he had to offer rested on the want of explicitness as to the time. The prisoner was stated to have vended certain works within his shop in the course of the present year, or during some of the by past months thereof, without the specification of the day or the month—a latitude which he did not think the public prosecutor was entitled to, except in cases where it was impossible for him to ascertain the time. This looseness contrasted the more with the minuteness in other parts of the indictment. He had a far more serious and more important objection, as to how far the indictment could be sustained, in so far as it charged the prisoner with the publication and vending of works of a gross and impure character, but which gave no specification of the parts or numbers of the works asserted to contain the objectionable passages. Under a charge so vague, every man in possession of a library might be liable to prosecution for some blasphemous or obscene passage, in some one or other of his books, and even the keeper of the Advocate's Library would not be free from punishment for having books, to a greater or less extent, of a bad character. Indeed, the whole of the cases found in the books went to show that the public prosecutor must specify the particular passages for the publication of which he craves punishment. He found this laid down in Jervis's Edition of Archbold (edit. 1842), where this crime is treated of, and the propriety of giving the objectionable passages enforced. To the second and third charges, he did not offer any objection, but the fourth he maintained to be irrelevant on the same grounds as the first, except as respects the matter of time, which was specified in proper form. Five parts of a book were specified, accompanied by the general averment that they were calculated to corrupt and vitiate the public morals—and the public prosecutor ought to have stated what he charged against the prisoner in reference to the contents of this book. Such specification he had not given, and his general averment that it contained bad passages, did not infer that there were no passages in it of a contrary tendency. The court would observe the difficulties in which the prisoner was thus placed, for the particular sections of the book might contain thousands of folios, and if the privilege of setting himself free from minuteness of detail and specification, hitherto considered imperative, were allowed the public prosecutor, the prisoner would have no means of defence left to him. The fifth and sixth charges were relevantly laid, the seventh was objectionable for the reasons he had stated, and so was the tenth and twelfth. Mr. McNeile concluded by arguing that the public prosecutor had taken a latitude in the framing of this indictment to which neither the practice of the court, nor the justice of the case, could give its sanction.

The deputy advocate (Mr. Urquhart) replied. He was glad that the prisoner's counsel had found no fault with the major proposition of the indictment, which was in accordance with the previous judgments of this court, and in complete analogy with the principles of the law of England on the point. He did not see how the objection to the statement of the time could be maintained. The prisoner was charged with publishing and vending certain bad books, and that during the whole of the by past months of this present year. There was no specification of particular acts of publishing and vending needed, as it was a continuous system during the whole time stated in the indictment. With the leave of the court, however, the public prosecutor would not press the first charge, to which Mr. McNeile had taken objection. With regard to the second great objection, urged against the relevancy by Mr. McNeile, he did hope that the court would seriously consider before they laid down, as the law of Scotland, that it was essential to the relevancy of such indictment, that all the objectionable passages of, perhaps, the most obscene and filthy of this class of publications, should be given on the face of the indictment, and thereby acquiring, through its getting into the hands of the printer, the jurymen,

and other parties, a certain amount of circulation among the community, and spreading the very pollution, which constituted the crime here charged. He had looked into the law of England on this subject, and he found that it agreed with what he was sure would be found to be the law and practice of this court—that there was no rule making it imperative in every case to specify the indecent passages on the face of the indictment. Mr. Chitty, to whose work, "Practice in Criminal law," he referred, expressly excepts from this rule, the case of publication in which the language, from its indecency, was such that it could not be mentioned in any court of justice, or in any reputable company of individuals. He could not believe the court would discard the charge on the ground of such an objection, for a certain latitude of mere reference to such passages was absolutely necessary. There was also another distinction to be drawn between the first and the second charge, in reference to this point, which Mr. McNeile had overlooked. It included the charge of publishing indecent prints. With regard to these, they had been described exactly as they ought to be—indeed, they could not have been described more specifically, unless they had been lithographed, which would hardly be insisted upon by the other side. The style of their description in this indictment, was exactly as it was in the English practice. With regard to the next charges, he apprehended the specification of the books, or of the parts of the books, was sufficiently explicit.

The Lord Justice-clerk—Might the objectionable passages not be stated in the indictment, as on such and such page, and in such and such a line and section of it?

Mr. Urquhart—In certain cases that might be very difficult. The tenth charge was sufficiently described by the title-page stated in detail, and by enumeration in the inventory of the numbers or parts found in the prisoner's shop—and with regard to the catalogue appended to the same publication, it was, in itself, of such a nature that no detail of its impurities could give any better or more accurate description of its offensiveness.

The lord advocate followed on the same side, and agreed to give up the first charge of the indictment. With regard to the objection taken to the second charge, he contended that the passages were unfit for publication, even in an indictment. A suggestion had been thrown out by the Lord Justice-clerk that the pages might be given, but their lordships would recollect that some of these books were far from being voluminous. They consisted for the most part of only a very few pages. With regard to the fourth and seventh charges, it was impossible, as their lordships would see, for the public prosecutor to lithograph the engravings here charged, and he contended that the description given of them was quite sufficient. With regard to the tenth and twelfth charges, it appeared to him that Mr. McNeile had mistaken their real object. The charges did not imply that the pannel vended the books contained in the catalogue, but that he had published the catalogue itself. It did not matter though the books mentioned in that catalogue had no existence, or although they were of the most innocent description. The charge was that the catalogue professing to describe them, was in itself, of an indecent character.

Mr. McNeile replied, and urged that no part of the objections which he had raised had been at all met on the other side, notwithstanding the learning, ingenuity, and research of his learned friend. With regard to the question of time, no answer whatever had been given—the indictment charged the publications to have been sold during the whole course of the present year, and yet it was so drawn up that if the public prosecutor could prove that such publications were sold on any single day of the present year, the object of the indictment would be answered. Was this vagueness fair to the prisoner? He contended, at some length, that the catalogue of books was not relevantly charged, as it was admitted, on the other side, that some of the books in it were of an innocent character, and yet no distinction was drawn between them and the books of an opposite tendency.

Their lordships then retired to the robing-room, and remained in consultation for about three quarters of an hour. On their return,

The Lord Justice-clerk stated the opinion of the court upon the indictment, and the objections which had been taken for the prisoner, with great propriety, to certain parts of that indictment. It was a matter of great satisfaction to the court, that in a case of this importance there was no difference of opinion on any point or which he was about to deliver their



judgment, or on the explanations which it was necessary to give in reference to it. They were of opinion that the special terms of the major proposition excluded it from objection, and therefore they had no hesitation in sustaining it. The court had no difficulty in holding that the *first* charge in the indictment, which indeed was not pressed on the attention of the court by the public prosecutor, was not relevantly laid, and could not therefore be sustained. The court also were of opinion that the *second* charge was not relevantly laid; but that opinion required farther explanation. In reference to the objection taken to the first and second charges, in regard to the time during which these works were set forth as exposed for sale, as not stated with sufficient precision, the court thought it unnecessary to give a final opinion on that point, as on that objection alone they did not mean to find the charge irrelevant, and from other objections did not find it to be necessary to decide that point—although they thought that there was such an ambiguity in the charge as to warrant the court, in the exercise of its control over these matters, to state that the time was not so specifically laid as to obviate all doubt and ambiguity. But the ground on which they sustained the objection to the second charge was more general, and might shortly be stated thus:—The charge stated that the pannel had wickedly and feloniously published certain books enumerated in an inventory, of the character described in the major proposition, and that they contained certain prints of the character therein described. When such a number of works was stated, the court thought it necessary to the ends of justice that some reference should be made to the passages in these books on which the prosecutor relied, and also to the number of prints which each was said to contain of the character stated in the indictment. For instance, that such a work contained five or six prints, and that it should specify the pages in which the passages were contained on which they meant to found. On this ground they did not think this charge relevant. They had less difficulty in coming to this conclusion, because, with a full reference to the object the prosecutor had in view, he could have had no difficulty in affording the information which the court thought necessary. The prosecutor must have examined these works. He must know the passages referred to, and be able to point them out by line and page, so as to exclude any doubt on the subject-matter of the charge. The *third* charge was not objected to, and they held it relevant. In the *fourth* charge there were not so many books said to have been sold as in the second; but even with regard to the five books therein specified, it was not stated what pages were referred to, nor whether all the pages of the books were equally bad. That was too great a latitude for the prosecutor to take, and deprived the prisoner of information to which he was entitled. If this charge were sustained in its present condition, it might be applied to works each part of which contained 500 pages, only one or two of which, however, in each, contained objectionable matter. If it had been intended to say that the whole work, with scarcely an exception, was of that character, it should have been more explicitly stated. But then, again, with reference to this as well as the second charge, the court were of opinion, that if the passages were of the lewd and obscene nature charged, it was not necessary to set them forth on the face of the indictment, and that passages of the character averred in this indictment were really unfit to be inserted into any legal instrument, as they certainly were not necessary for the information of the prisoner, provided a sufficient reference was given to the pages in which they were to be found. On the other hand, the passages ought to be specified by the pages and the lines, and it ought to have been stated that the books or portions of books containing the offensive passages were produced along with the indictment, and the court did not think that this was sufficiently complied with, by stating, at the close of the indictment, that they were so produced as if they were articles of evidence. It would be sufficient in this latter case if they were lodged a short time previous to the trial, whereas the court thought that they ought to have been lodged with the clerk of court along with the indictment, so that the pannel when served with it might have found in his hands the specific passages for which he was brought to trial. The next charge objected to, was the *seventh*, which was liable to the same objection as the fourth, in not stating the pages libelled, nor that the books were produced along with the indictment. There might perhaps be more difficulty with regard to the tenth charge but the opinion of the court was that this charge was liable, in part, at

least, to the objection sustained against the fourth and seventh. At the same time the court was clear that the prints were described with sufficient accuracy, and that the pannel could have no difficulty in understanding what was charged against him. It was not necessary that the indictment should contain or exhibit a representation or exhibition of the indecent prints founded on. It was enough to describe them, as done in this indictment. The charge with regard to the catalogue of books was also relevantly laid. The *twelfth* charge was liable to the objection stated against the tenth—that the books and prints were not sufficiently referred to, and were not said to be lodged in the clerk's hands. There was no need for quoting or minutely describing them. It would, indeed, be monstrous if the prosecutor, the protector and guardian of public morals, were to be compelled to set forth, on the face of an indictment, prints and passages of the nature he had described; but then the pannel must have access to them, that he might know the nature of the charges against him. As to the general disposal of the indictment, he would remark that the court had little doubt the public prosecutor would be disposed to do that which he was about to recommend—that, considering the character of the first and second charges, considering that the exhibition of this indictment in the hands of the jury to be afterwards sworn, might operate, unintentionally and insensibly, greatly to the prejudice of the pannel, by creating a suspicion that he was the wholesale vendor of such works; the court thought, under the circumstances, that they should take the course, which he was sure the prosecutor would be inclined to take, that having sustained these objections, they did not think it right and proper that the pannel should be sent to trial on the remaining charges.

The lord advocate said, he would be the last man to press the putting any prisoner on trial in circumstances which might operate so greatly to his prejudice, and was quite prepared to take that course.

The Lord Justice-clerk said the court were fully aware that they had only anticipated the course which the lord advocate would have himself adopted.

After some conversation as to the precise effect of the deliverance their lordships had given, the interlocutor was drawn out holding the first, second, fourth, seventh, tenth, and twelfth charges in the indictment irrelevant as laid; and, on the motion of the lord advocate, the diet was deserted against the prisoner *pro loco et tempore*, and he was held to bail on a new warrant.

The indictment against Finlay was not called, as falling under the same objections with Robinson's.

The upshot of all this is, that Messrs. Robinson and Finlay are again released on bail, and though they may be called upon at the next sittings of the judiciary court (about four months hence) to answer such portions of their several indictments as are relevantly laid, it is not at all likely they will be again brought into court. It is the current opinion that they will not again be meddled with, unless they commit fresh offences against the law's majesty. Thus unsatisfactorily has terminated this unsatisfactory affair. So far as Robinson and Finlay are individually concerned, the whole business is well enough—but I cannot see that the result of her majesty's advocate's proceedings against them, has advanced the cause of progress a single step. The crown officer has been baffled and humiliated—instead of victimising, he has been made the victim—while those he intended to crush have come off almost scot free. So far excellent—but as the trial involved no principle, it involved nothing that can either greatly interest or materially benefit the public. Robinson's counsel did his duty. He picked holes in the indictment quite large enough for his client to get his body through. The report shows that neither counsel nor judges said a word about the principles on which the indictment was framed. All turned upon the pivot of mere technicality. Lawyers, of course, like better to discover flaws in such indictments as this of Robinson's, than to denounce the monstrous principles on which they rest. I am no lawyer—and that fact will account for the regret I felt at the success of Robinson's counsel.

My own opinion is, that nothing is gained to the cause of freedom, by hiring counsel to find flaws in indictments, or, indeed, hiring them at all, except when, like Mr. Thomas, they are prepared to assert their client's right to speak, publish, or vend any opinions whatever. In Robinson's case, counsel was, perhaps, indispensable, as he could not reckon upon bodily strength sufficient to enable him even to read a defence. His physical unfitness precluded him from making the attempt. Had his body been sound as his disposition, he would not have been bothered by counsel at all—and really it should be matter for grave reflection among the go-ahead infidels, whether it is fitting that men of sickly and delicate constitutions, be placed in positions of a perilous character. Persons with shattered constitutions, or constitutions subject to acute pains, are not proper persons to openly war with the powers that be—those selected to bear the brunt of persecution, should be men whose powers of endurance are unquestionable. The late R. Carlile was one of the very few reformers well qualified to bear imprisonment. When I last saw him, he told me that he never felt so completely happy as when in prison. Whereas, for an individual afflicted as Robinson is, a prison is one of the worst of places, for which reason, and no other, I felt pleased when he escaped the fangs of his persecutors, under cover of legal technicalities. Finlay seemed rather annoyed than otherwise, by so unexpected a termination of proceedings. *He* had reckoned upon reading a defence, and was much disappointed—but though he was not allowed to read it, the public have now an opportunity to do so, as it has been published by the "Scottish Anti-Persecution Union," for the trifling charge of sixpence.

So much with respect to these two abortional cases; but though they have come to less than smoke, the enemies of persecution should not for a single instant relax in their exertions, as the probability, nay, the *certainty*, is, that before this bulletin is in print, an indictment will have been laid, quite relevantly, too, against Paterson, who is coolly playing what many think a desperate game, but a game that I *know* must be *won*, before men can do more than boast about mental freedom. He is fighting for the right of expression, that right which is both paramount and fundamental to all others. With the right to express *all* our thoughts we never can be slaves, without that right we never can be freemen. Paterson's object is to achieve the same measure of practical freedom for the atheist as for the christian, for the man who rejects all religions, as for him who receives any one or any score of them. Away, then, with apathy. Let the infidel party remember that it is to such men as Paterson they owe every fraction of the liberty they enjoy. If bigotry is beaten here, it will speedily be beaten everywhere, for here is its stronghold. The present struggle is for no petty object, it is for a great principle, a principle of unspeakable importance, and compared with which all other principles sink into insignificance. The right to print or speak precisely what we think upon all questions, is a right for which every man should struggle, even "in the throat of death." There are, I am aware, many individuals, and excellent individuals too, whom nature and art have conspired to make cowardly, to such I say, spare your persons, but spare not your purses. There is no selfishness so gross as that which prompts a man to hold back that assistance which he might easily and safely render to nobler spirits, who have both courage and will to fight his battles. Those who neither have courage nor means, are of course cut off from useful action in a dangerous sphere. One cannot reasonably expect blood from a stone, and fully as reasonable would it be to look for blood in stones as ask something from those who have nothing. No, those upon whom I call for *monetary* assistance, are wealthy parties, who glory in the name of unbeliever, who profess

great affection for the principle, men of the Patersonian stamp are labouring to realise. There are parties, and I know scores of them, with money more than ample to supply every reasonable want, who, nevertheless, do not subscribe a copper for any useful purpose whatever. Their subscriptions assume the untangible shape of talk. If talking alone would radically reform men's intellects, these are the people to accomplish the business. Out on such reformers—they are not worth the time one wastes in listening to them. As to that other tolerably large section of irreligionists, who are ever disposed to pick a quarrel with their opponents, but never disposed to fight with them—they are well rebuked by the fabulist, who tells us that once, no matter when, a pugnacious duck was revelling in a pond, whereupon a dog coming to take a drink, she wished to prevent his dogship slaking his thirst, but at the same time was far from willing to come to blows; seeing which, the latter exclaimed, "*Ah, Madam Duck, those who have neither strength nor courage to fight, should at least be civil.*" I think with his dogship in this matter, and seriously advise the section of infidels here pointed at, to keep civil tongues in their heads, if, like the fabled duck, they have neither strength nor courage to fight, or worse, if they do nought else, by their mischievous braggadocio and ceaseless chattering, than throw obstacles in the way of their friends. These remarks may appear uncalled for, by those who do not know so well as the writer what a drag and an excrescence this contemptible section of infidel chatterboxes have hitherto been upon the body of reform.

I must now say something about Robinson's indictment. It is very well understood here that the authorities have long had an evil eye upon Robinson, and that they have delayed pouncing upon him so long, from fear of consequences. The indictment sets forth, that "Albeit, by the laws of this and of every other well-governed realm, the wickedly and feloniously *publishing, vending, or circulating, or causing to be published, vended, or circulated, or exposed for sale, any profane, impious, or blasphemous book, or printed work, or any book, or printed work, containing a denial of the truth and authority of the holy scriptures, or of the christian religion, or devised, contrived, and intended to asperse, vilify, ridicule, or bring into contempt the holy scriptures, or the christian religion; as also the wickedly and feloniously publishing, vending, or circulating, or causing to be published, vended, or circulated, or exposing for sale, any lewd, impure, gross, or obscene book, or printed work, or print, engraving, or representation, devised, contrived, and intended to vitiate and corrupt the morals of the lieges, and to raise and create in their minds inordinate and lustful desires, are crimes of an heinous nature, and severely punishable; yet true it is and of verity, that you the said Henry Robinson are guilty of the said crimes," &c. Now this charge, so far from being true and of verity, is positively false, neither more nor less, in fact, than a christian conspiracy to ruin Robinson. I repeat, it is a mere conspiracy, hatched by christians for the vilest of purposes. Before considering the indictment in detail, I will say a few words about the *right* to sell works allowed on all hands to be obscene. There are works with respect to the character of which there is but one opinion. Such, for example, as "Memoirs of the Life and Adventures of Fanny Hill," or "Life and Memoirs of Harriet Wilson." These are works about whose demoralising influence I have not the slightest doubt. They are openly sold however, and notwithstanding my opinion is hostile to them, it is *my* opinion only. Other individuals may entertain other opinions. But though I would not be a party to suppressing the publishers of such books, I would by no means be a party to encouraging them. I am prepared just as freely to maintain certain publishers' right to print or sell books of the description alluded to, as I*



am to maintain my own right to print or sell books of an anti-theologic character. I will sympathise with and aid the seller of any book, when authority attempts to crush him, because authority assumes functions it has no rational right to assume, when pretending to decide what books are, and are not, fit for general perusal. Government might just as rationally prescribe the physical, as the mental, diet of those they govern. But though I maintain that all in a well-regulated state would be permitted to publish what any might please to publish, I do not feel called upon to aid every crazy book-maker to circulate such trash as his malformed brain may produce—I will allow him the same right that I claim for myself. Doctrines from which I entirely dissent are daily put forth by the editors of papers, nay, more than merely dissenting from, I abhor them, as doctrines the most atrocious and demoralising. But because such is my opinion of those doctrines, it by no means follows that the opinion is a sound one. I may be altogether mistaken in my estimate of them, just in the same way that those editors may be entirely at fault when judging the doctrines I and others, who think generally as I do, publish to the world. Opinion is not fact, it is merely individual estimate of fact, sometimes, indeed, only individual estimate of supposed, not actual, fact. There is no insolence less justifiable than the insolence of individuals, who would fain make the world believe *they* can draw the line between moralising and demoralising opinion. *They* alone are right, everybody else of course being wrong—they are the never mistaken judges of opinions. It is not, however, to be expected that individuals who conscientiously object to a given class of opinions, will either aid in circulating them, or sympathise with those who do. It is surely one thing to support men in the assertion of their right to sell such books as they may think fit to sell, but quite another to aid their sale, if you think them injurious to public morals. I object to many books which are openly sold in every part of the country—I think them vitiating in the extreme, only calculated to inflame passions of the lowest description. Such books are "The Life and surprising Adventures of Bigenio—or Man-Woman, and Woman-Man," the "Guide to Green-horns," and scores of the same description, which assert no principle, nor do I think answer any useful purpose. Those who sell them are reckless individuals, who will sell anything of which money can be made—so that while I would, *upon principle*, protect them from the law's vengeance, I cannot sympathise with them on their acts—on the contrary, I look upon them as a pest, a nuisance, and the shame of any party to which they may ally themselves. I have often observed, with feelings of deep disgust, "Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary," placed side by side in the same shop, with books of a character so filthy, than none but persons of depraved tastes would think either of concocting or selling them. Indeed, I have long suspected that our decent and most virtuous aristocracy, hire persons to open shops of the description referred to, for the express purpose of allying the cause of infidelity with the cause of demoralisation. Whether this suspicion be warrantable or not, that the owners of such shops have far more damaged the assertions of infidels principles, than any other parties, I have not the least doubt. Therefore I denounce them—therefore I have determined never to act with, or stretch out the hand of fellowship to, any individual who, for base lucre, lends himself to the propagation of stuff only calculated to debauch the intellects of all who are subjected to its influence. But though I will neither sympathise nor act with such, I will act *for* them, should authority attempt to put them down by any other than *educational measures*—for authority, cannot interfere with such matters, without violating a principle which is fundamental to all good government. I would, under such circumstances,

come to the rescue of obscene book-vendors, for the self-same reasons that I would aid the "Times," or "Standard" editors, were they called upon by authority to answer for the villainous trash they sometimes put to paper. I have seen articles in the Times and Standard, not to mention such works as the "Age," "John Bull," and "Satirist," far better calculated to demoralise society, than the worst books sold by Dugdale—but as I hold that only the press can purify the press, I also hold that authority should let it alone. Authority, in short, should protect *all* men in the publication of their thoughts, and not dictate to, or persecute, *any*. If so much liberty induce disease in the body-politic, its cure will be found in that liberty. Nothing so effectually corrects the vices of liberty as liberty itself. It is just because perfect liberty of publication is allowed only to the champions of certain sects and systems, that the press has not, long ere this, radically reformed European society. A free press has been everywhere talked about, but nowhere realised. The notions of a free press which generally prevail, are analogous to those which fit through the brains of the Solomon who manufactures paragraphs for the Edinburgh Evening Courant. A vast majority think with him, that *fair* discussion is an excellent thing, so excellent, that the *limits* thereof should in no wise be transgressed, which limits he and they have satisfied themselves are the true limits. Woe to the writer or speaker whose true limits are not exactly their true limits. Ask these sapient people whether denouncing infidelity as satanic, and infidels as Satan's emissaries, is within the limits of fair discussion? They reply at once, Oh, yes, that is just up to the right mark—but if an infidel retort the self-same abuse upon christians, then the fair-discussionists immediately discover that the limits of *fair* discussion are shamefully transgressed. Verily, these christians are nice people—doers unto others as they would be done unto with a vengeance. If scoundrels ought to be punished according to the measure of their scoundrelism, these praters about *fair* discussion would be made to roar beneath the hangman's whip. The worst criminals that ever mounted scaffold are, to my thinking, infinitely more respectable than men of talent who use the press as a tool wherewith to perpetuate falsehood and bigotry. Yet, such men are the average of newspaper editors—fellows who write anything they are hired to write—their principle is to obey the best paymaster. They will *their* liberty up, or write it down, at the bidding of their masters—to oblige them, they would, like Cardinal Duperron, argue either *for* or *against* the existence of God—aye, or any other existence, their own incline. These are the chief corruptors of society—these are the people who strain at gnats while swallowing camels—these are the pharisees of the press, who wear the garment of holiness over rottenness and corruption—these are the scribes whose trade it is to pour the poison of lies into the public ear—to keep alive almost defunct prejudices, to fan the flame of fanaticism—and under the stale pretence of public good, aid the ruling few to rivet old, and forge new, fetters, for the priest-ridden many.

While writing the last paragraph, information reached me that Paterson's shop had been entered by order of the procurator—whereupon I posted there in all haste, and found no fewer than eight protectors of public morals and divine truth, laying their holy hands upon Paterson's property. I found the door closed, and it was not without considerable difficulty that I procured admission. Among the property seized, were 41 of the God *versus* Paterson books, 8 Moral Force Addresses, 3 copies of Paine's Age of Reason, 14 numbers of Discussion between Robert Dale Owen and Origen Bachelier, 9 of the pamphlet entitled Does our experience in the present world warrant us in expecting another? 1 perfect copy of the Oracle of Reason, bound up with the Deist, 1 of

Greatest Question in Theology fully Discussed, 2 of Paine's Political Works, 20 numbers of Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary, 59 ditto of Strauss's Life of Jesus, 2 copies of the Millennium, 4 ditto of Christianity a Failure, 1 Appendix to Paine's Theological Works, 6 of Clerical Anecdotes, or Parsons' Comic Songster, 17 of The Bible an Improper Book for Youth, and Dangerous to the Easily Excited Brain, 1 Book of the New Moral World, 33 numbers of Inquiry Concerning Political Justice, 179 Placards (blasphemous, *in course*) 12 Day of Judgment, 41 Investigators, 913 Oracles of Reason, 32 numbers of the Yahoo, 3 Great Dragon Cast Out, 1 large board, 11 numbers of Common Sense.

Such are the works his fiscalship may now add to his already well-furnished library of reason. A circumstance occurred, while the house was being emptied of its blasphemy, which almost made a providence-man of me. One of the eight worthies who officiated, suddenly fell upon the floor in a fit, where he lay violently convulsed and foaming at the mouth for several minutes. A female who was present said, *Ah, gentlemen, if Mr. Paterson had fallen into a fit, instead of this man, you would have said it was a judgment of God upon him.* This remark nettled very much the illustrious *seven*, one of whom cried out, "Hold your tongue, woman, or you will be taken next." But though, as a good christian, he was bound to check her for speaking such blasphemous truth, it cannot fail to strike the reader, who is fully assured there is special providence even in the fall of a sparrow, that providence would have taken better care of an individual so religiously employed. However, into a fit, as aforesaid, one of the eight illustrious Jerry Abershaws of authority tumbled, and most lucky, or rather providential, it was, as regards infidels, that Paterson was not in the fit, instead of one hired to ease him of his property. Such is the present aspect of affairs. Paterson's shop has been entered, rifled of its heterodox contents, and himself marched, or rather coached, off a prisoner, which he must remain till examined by the city sheriff, who, in answer to an application for the acceptance of good and sufficient bail, said he could not entertain the question of bail at present. When, however, Paterson is committed for trial, as I presume he will be, bail will be tendered, but whether the authorities may or may not think fit to accept it, is a problem I am not prepared to solve. The effect of Paterson's daring proceedings, as regards Robinson and Finlay, has been differently estimated by different individuals. Some think that they will not be again brought into court. It has been whispered about during the last few days, that her majesty's advocate has determined to abandon his indictments, that nearly one half having been quashed by the judges, he had determined to be liberal and quash the rest himself. Others think that there is a deep-laid scheme to lull Robinson and Finlay into a feeling of false security, so that, in November next, they may be unprepared successfully to defend themselves. If they are brought to trial, and Paterson too, there certainly will be work cut out for the judges, the press, and the infidel party. My own opinion is that they will all be brought to account in November, and dealt with unsparingly. This opinion is pronounced, not merely because I hold it, but also with a view to stimulate the enemies of persecution. Now is the time for them to make a great effort. The friends of persecution seem determined to act vigorously, let its enemies act more vigorously—if the former think to stop the march of reason, by wearing spurs upon their heels, let the latter act upon Lord Brougham's advice, and wear spurs upon their toes. Those who are striving to emancipate human intellect, may depend upon it that a spur upon the toe may be as effectually brought into play, as a spur upon the heel. If we could but contrive to give religious bigots two good kicks for every one good kick

they give us, take my word for it they will soon grow weary of kicking. And assuredly there never was a period when things in general looked better for the cause of reason and truth. With Glo'ster no-persecutionists may well exclaim, "By Saint Paul, the work goes bravely on." A letter received last evening from Glasgow informs me that the reformers of that city are determined to rally round the standard of freedom. Mr. Jeffery, who is there at present, in the capacity of socialist missionary, is a host in himself, and I doubt not that he will contribute very largely by his exertions to crush the monster persecution. I am invited by the Glaswegians to pay them a visit on Thursday next, as they propose to hold a public meeting, with a view to collect funds and take all other usefully practicable measures in aid of the movement. I shall certainly be there, if not compelled to be somewhere else. The reformers of other towns in Scotland and England should imitate the people of Glasgow. If meetings of the right sort were held simultaneously in the chief towns only, of both countries, persecuting fanatics would be scared from their prey. In nautical phrase, there should now be "a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether." The English provincial press is beginning to handle the question. Presently the spirit will move it to do something tangible. The "Tyne Mercury," of the 1st inst., contains a paragraph headed "Persecution in Edinburgh," worded thus:

We have just received a letter from a friend in Edinburgh, from which we make the following extract, calculated to amuse our readers we should think; though, upon the whole, the thing is above a joke:

"Messrs. W. and H. Robinson, booksellers, Greenside-street, and Mr. Finlay (Robinson's father-in-law), bookseller, Haddington-place, both of Edinburgh, have lately been apprehended, and a large portion of their stock seized, by warrant issued by the procurator-fiscal, on a charge of what is called 'blasphemy,' and for vending books calculated to injure, nay, destroy the morals of the community! And among the works seized to substantiate this charge, is Mr. Larkin's pamphlet, 'Sunday no Sabbath!' The works of Mirabaud, Shelley, Paine, Voltaire, and Volney, have also come under the ban of the sapient Scottish judges, instigated, as it is too much to be feared, by the clergy. The parties are at present out on bail.... The walls are covered with bills flaming with indignation at the outrage on common sense, and meetings to petition parliament to remove the noxious laws are being held.

This is just what should be done everywhere. Laws which check the freest expression, are indeed noxious. The law of liberty spoken of by gospel James, is the only law appertaining to opinion which a free people would tolerate—a law of liberty being, in truth, no law at all—as "where law begins liberty ends."

Coming back to the consideration of Robinson's indictment, whence the arrest of Paterson caused me to break off, I hesitate not to say that a baser attempt to ruin a man by false procedures, bearing, however, the semblance of true procedures, never was made in the worst times of the worst governed country. The vile aim of the parties who framed that indictment is so palpable, as to defy mistake. Only superstitious slaves, whom priests have "high gravel blinded," by fanatical prejudices, can fail to perceive that the aim of Robinson's persecutors is to crush him for vending obnoxious opinions upon religious topics, under cover of a charge totally distinct in its character. I do not expect to be generally believed, when I state that though Robinson stands charged on the face of the indictment with circulating printed works grossly obscene and impure—the fact is, that in the list of those thus characterised, there are only three or four in which the most actively filthy can discover the least trace of obscenity or impurity. Two of these have been mentioned above, namely, "The Life of the celebrated Miss Fanny



Hill," and the "Guide to Greenhorns." A third objectionable book found in Robinson's shop, is titled "Memoirs of a French Lady of Pleasure," which book, by the way, was not his own, but the property of a customer, who had ordered him to get it bound. I have carefully gone over the rather long list of works paraded in the indictment as obscene, and can only find one more that readers the most squeamish are likely to object to. The work in question, contains a number of silly tales or lies, called "Annals of the Green-Room," whose concocter has taken great pains "To collect amusing anecdotes and singular adventures never before published—Memoirs of Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Waylett, Miss Eliza Vincent, and other theatrical ladies." These four are the only printed works found by the fiscal, which are open to objection on the score of their offensiveness. All the rest which her majesty's advocate classed as obscene, are of a purely medical character. "Man and Woman considered physically, in a state of Marriage," translated from the French of M. De Lignac, for the use of students, by John Knox Stuart, M. D. "Marriage Physiologically Discussed." "An Essay on populousness, by Marcus," are among the number. They are, in fact, a fair sample of the whole. Now persons who have not read these books may be forward enough to condemn them, but those who have time and inclination to do so, will find there is not a single really impure or obscene sentence in any one of them. If medical books treating sexual questions are to be denounced as impure, and simply because they do treat them, I must say that common notions about purity and decency, are very different from my notions. To my thinking, Mr. Robert Dale Owen's "Moral Physiology," is one of the most pure and useful pamphlets that ever was penned—yet as fitly might her majesty's advocate have placed that in his category, as those (with the exceptions made) he has placed there. According to an authority much respected by christians, "to the pure all things are pure," and though I am not prepared to go the full length warranted by that remark, I am perfectly convinced that to the corrupt purity itself doth off appear corruption—and upon this principle I can very well account for the lord advocate's quickness to detect impurity, where purity itself would fail to discover it. I tell him and those with whom he acts, that the obscenity is not in the books they have proscribed, but in their own ill-regulated brains.

# NAMES.

"WHAT'S in a name?" Everything. Give a dog an ill name, and hang him. For this reason nature has given to men two ears and but one nose, that where one is led by the nose, two may be led by the ears. Names govern the world, sit upon thrones, lead armies, set men together by the ears, pick pockets, frighten naughty babies of all sizes, drive men mad, make books read that are not readable, open people's eyes and set them staring, fill people's mouths and set them gabbling, and distend their empty souls with wind. "What's in a name?" The very question is its own answer, for it never would have been asked had there not been something marvellous in it. A name, a breath, a sound, a puff of articulated air, a thing that has no meaning, no prototype, a most undefinable word that means nothing visible or invisible, nothing that is in heaven above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, and yet it makes a noise louder than thunder, is more mighty than the invisible wind, and more rapid in its executions than the forked lightning. Who can stand against a name of reproach—who can resist the fascinations of a name of flattery? Nine-tenths of the human race would abstain from eating and drinking, or at least would pretend to do so, if a bad name were given to these indispensable operations. When an Irishman was, by two wicked wags, placed in a sedan chair without a bottom to it, and driven about, up one street and down another, over mud and through mire, he exclaimed, as soon as he was liberated from his portable prison, "Arrah, now dear honies, and if ye call this riding, I'd rather by half walk on foot, if it were not for the name of the thing."

Names are the magic words by which knaves rule fools—they are less substantial than any conceivable shadow, and are more powerful than any known substance. In the good old days, when blazing faggots and thumb-screws were used for the dispersion of theological doubts, the word heresy was a term of potency at which the blood curdled, and the whole system thrilled with horror. It was able to close the eye, to harden the heart, to estrange a mother from her child, a hus-

band from his wife, and to destroy all the impulses of humanity and the sympathies of the soul. By the magic of the word heresy the book of instruction was closed, and the volume of nature was read with a trembling heart and a half shut eye. By the term heresy, men were frightened into the acknowledgment, aye, even into the belief, that black was white, that custard was mustard, and that the moon was made of green cheese. And did the good people know what the word "heresy" meant? Not they, poor souls—they would have thought it heresy to ask the meaning of the word—it was enough for them to be frightened at it.

Did not the doctrine of *divine right* play as many fool's tricks with the human understanding as the word heresy? And who, in the name of common sense, could ever define, limit, comprehend, or even intelligibly express the doctrine? Not one—they that were gulled by it had not wit enough, and they that gulled others by it had too much wit to define or attempt to define it. Names are like ghosts—they are to be trembled at from a distance, to be seen through a mist, never to be grappled with. There is not one man in a thousand that would dare to go near enough to a ghost to touch it—nor is there one in ten thousand who would think it at all necessary to understand or to attempt to define a popular catchword.

When a word is defined it is confined, it is pinioned, it is bound hand and foot, it is harnessed and in trammels, it can turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. It is of no use in getting up a row, it has lost its liberty and its elasticity. It is no longer a chartered libertine, but it is a reformed prostitute, an imprisoned Magdalene. When a word is defined and understood, nobody quarrels about it—it occasions no black eyes and no bloody noses, no long speeches, any midnight debates, no column after column in the daily papers. It is of no use to any party in religion or politics. Oh, what precious geese are those metaphysicians who attempt to define the words that they use! It is well for them that they attempt an impossibility, for if they were to succeed, their occupation would be gone, their business would be up, for all their business is to make a great big book about great big words—and to leave the world as wise as they found it.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

## CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

BY AN INVESTIGATOR.

As there have been volumes written by those professing christianity, to prove the fulfilment of what they term the prophecies of the old and new testaments, I shall in this communication essay to prove to all who may read your most valuable paper, that there is one grand thing they call a prophecy, contained in the new testament, which has never been accomplished according to the predictions of Jesus Christ and all his biographers.

The prophecy concerning the second advent of Christ, has been thundered forth from the pulpit for aught we know, every day in the year throughout all christendom upwards of eighteen hundred years. At this time I will venture to say that no man nor set of men will be bold enough to assert that Jesus Christ has ever made this second appearance in the manner in which he and his disciples said he would. I have carefully examined the book from beginning to end, and have noted all the passages which have any direct reference to the said second advent, and find that they all refer to this event as about to be consummated in the very generation in which Christ and all his disciples lived.\* I shall commence with Matthew, and so on with all the writers contained in the new testament. I shall give chapter and verse, until I give the whole, and review with, perhaps, a word or two of comment. We can reasonably suppose, that a man of seventy could not legally be hung for quoting from the sacred volume in order to test the truth of the same. But to the law and testimony.

Matthew, 10th chapter, verse 23rd, Christ's own words to his disciples are, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another, for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel until the son of man come." Chap. xxiii. 26, after Christ had denounced a great number of woes on the Jewish nation, and especially on the scribes and pharisees, he says, "Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation." Chap. 24th, here again many calamities, signs, and wonders, are predicted by Christ himself—at verse 27th he says, "For as the lightning cometh from the east, and shineth even to the west, so shall also the coming of the son of man be." This is quick travelling indeed. Verse 30th: "And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Ver. 30: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Observe, now, this verse cannot apply to the destruction of Jerusalem only, for the elect are to be gathered throughout the whole world.

\* Vide "Strauss's Life of Jesus."

Verse 32nd: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree, when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." Verse 33: "So likewise when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Verse 34: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled." And so on throughout the chapter, he endeavours with all his rhetoric to convince his disciples that he would come in that very generation. I believe it is not contended by any that he came personally in that generation or any other since.

It is said that his disciples saw him ascend, and it is also said that two angels stood by and exclaimed—"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come as ye have seen him go into heaven." If he ascended at all, it must have been with flesh, blood and all, corporally. Christ told the high priest, on his examination, that he "should see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." (Mark, chap. xiv., 62). As this high priest was not a believer in Christ, how could he see him coming, with spiritual eyes? All a subterfuge.

Well, we go on. In chapter xxv., Christ continues his discourse to his disciples, in accordance with their request to him, which was, that he should tell them when his second advent should be; as such he commences this chapter with the adverb *then*, which is a word to denote a precise time, which was undoubtedly the time of his coming—and he goes on to illustrate the same by a number of parables. When he comes to the 31st verse, he says—"When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory." "And before him shall be gathered all nations," &c. (xxxii.), agreeing with what he had said about "his elect," in the 24th chapter.

In the 26th chapter, while under examination by the high priest, and being urged to say whether he was the son of God—"Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (verse 64). A sight which no high priest nor any other priest has seen to this day, at any rate.

I shall now give you some of Mark's hints. In his chapter viii., and last verse, he gives Christ's words—"Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his father, with the holy angels." And in chapter ix., ver. 1—"And he said unto them, verily I say unto you, there be some of them which stand here that shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God come with power."

In Mark, chap. xiii., after telling of great signs and wonders which should be seen previous to his coming, even the falling of the stars, &c., at verse 26, he says—"And then shall they see the son of man coming with great power and



glory;" and he continues on to the end of the chapter, exhorting them to watch and be ready, for he would come at an hour when they might not expect him, &c. In chap. xiv., ver. 62, when examined by the high-priest, being asked if he was the son of God—"Jesus said, I am, and ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Mark, although inspired to tell the same story as Matthew, says very little about the advent.

Luke has said about as much as Mark, and, for aught I know, copied some from his brother—and in his 9th chapter, verses 26 and 27—"For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his father's, and of the holy angels, but I tell you of a truth there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God." Chap. x., verse 11—"Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth on us we do wipe off against you, notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." Verse 12, "But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable in *that day* for Sodom than for that city." In other places it is said—"It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." All which go to prove (in my humble opinion) that he was referring to his second advent in order to destroy this material world with all its appendages, and to reward every one as his works might be.

In chapter xii., verse 40, he says—"Be ye also ready, for the son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." In chapter xxi., Christ gives an awful portrait of the great distress of all nations, previous to the destruction of Jerusalem; and at the 27th verse he says—"And then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Then he gives them the parable of the fig-tree; and at verse 31, he says—"So likewise when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand;" and at verse 32, he says—"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled."

I come now to the evangelist John, who it seems was the beloved disciple, and ought to have known his master's most profound secrets, but he says very little about his second advent, in his gospel, and evidently reserves his knowledge on this advent for a more appropriate season, which you will see in the sequel. In his chapter xvi., verse 16, he comes very near letting out the secret almost to a day. He makes Christ say in this verse, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the father." Verse 22, "And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your joy shall no man take from you." Verse 23, "And in *that day* ye shall ask me nothing," &c. Chapter xxi., verse 22, "Jesus saith unto him (Peter) if I *will* that he (John) tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." This looks very much as if he intended John should stay where he was, until he returned from a visit to the father.

I shall now give you some of old father Paul's notions about this second coming of Christ.

To the Romans (chap. xiii. vers. 12) he says—"The night is far spent, the *day* is at hand," &c. You will find the old apostle learned and full of rhetoric. Chap. xvi., ver. 20, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, amen."

1 Cor., chap. i., ver. 7, "So that ye come behind in no gift waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Ver. 8, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end blameless in the *day* of our Lord Jesus Christ." Chap. iv. ver. 5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come," &c. Chap. vii. ver. 29, "But this I say, brethren, the *time* is

short," &c. Chap. xv. ver. 23-4, speaking of the resurrection, "But every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his *coming*, then cometh the end."

Philippians, chap. i. ver. 6, 10, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath began a good work in you will perform it unto the *day* of Jesus Christ. That ye may approve things that are excellent—that ye may be sincere and without offence until the *day* of Christ." Chap. iii. ver. 20, "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Chap. iv. ver. 5, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is *at hand*."

1 Thessalonians, chapter iii., ver. 13, "To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God our father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all saints. Chap. iv. ver. 15, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," &c. Ver. 16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Ver. 17, "Then we which are *alive* and *remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This one passage is sufficient to prove that Paul fully believed that Christ's second advent would be in that very generation in which he then lived, for he gives the whole description in the present tense, and I think no one will presume to say he did not refer in a very impartial manner to a general resurrection of the dead, and final judgment of the world, of which we now hear so much. And I farther presume to say, no one will be bold enough to assert that any such things have happened, either carnally, spiritually, or literally.

2 Thessalonians, chap. i. ver. 7, "And to you who are troubled, rule with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." Ver. 8, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Chap. ii. ver. 1, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the gathering together unto him (ver. 2) that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as the *day* of the Lord is *at hand*."

1 Timothy, chap. vi. ver. 14, "That thou keep this commandment without spot unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hebrews, chap. x. ver. 37, "For yet a little while he that shall come, will come and will not *tarry*."

James, chap. v. ver. 7, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord," &c. Ver. 8, "Establish your hearts, for the *coming* of the Lord *draweth nigh*." Verse 9, "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." Positive language, this, and by an inspired writer, too, that could not err.

1 Peter chap. iv. ver. 5, "Who shall give account to him that is *ready* to judge the quick and dead." Ver. 7, "But the end of all things is *at hand*—be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer."

2 Peter, chapter iii., verse 10. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up," &c.

1 General Epistle of John (that beloved disciple), chapter ii., verse 18. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there

many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the *last time*." Verse 28. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his *coming*."

The old apostle appears very anxious lest his children, the followers of Christ, should lose all hope of his Lord's coming, and they might be caught taking a nap. All the above texts have been indiscriminately applied to prove this second advent, at different periods and for different purposes. How any one can reconcile a part of the above quotations to a second advent to overthrow the Jewish economy, and part to the second advent of Jesus Christ to judge the world and to reward every one according to his deeds, whether they be good or evil, I cannot for my life see; unless they would contend for a third advent, of which they have no account; at least, they have never produced it.

I shall now (I think) prove the fact which I have undertaken, beyond all rational doubt, by introducing what John the Revelator says about this second advent, in his Apocalypse. Chapter i., verse 3. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." Chapter ii., verse 25. "But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." (This must be an allusion to the doctrines of Christ, which the churches were fast losing). Chapter iii., verse 3. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Verse 11. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Chapter vi., verse 17. "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Chapter xxii., verse 6. "And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." Verse 7. "Behold, I come quickly," &c. Verse 10. "And he saith unto me, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." Verse 12. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be." And, lastly, verse 20. "He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly." And John finishes the chapter, by saying—"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

I shall now conclude the subject, by making a few desultory remarks on the whole.

If the above predictions do not point emphatically and definitely to Christ's coming, in that generation in which he lived and died, there can be no use for plain language. Some may say that a majority of the above quotations refer to a spiritual kingdom which Christ promised to set up on the abolition of the Jewish economy; but it will not tell, for stubborn facts are directly against the assertion. Who will be bold enough to affirm, that the great and awful previous signs and wonders mentioned, have ever taken place? Such as the "Falling of the stars, and the son of man coming in the clouds accompanied with angels, power, and great glory, to judge the world, to distribute rewards and punishments, according to deeds done in the body."

In my humble opinion, the truth is, that John the Revelator the last of Christ's surviving apostles (the others having been all persecuted to death for preaching christianity), being sorely persecuted himself, and while in the Isle of Patmos, took it into his head to revive their sinking cause (Miller like), by alarming the fears of all the people, and especially the seven churches of Asia, for which purpose his Apocalypse is well calculated. We find in Paul's Epistles, intimations that all had back-slidden, more or less, and many had entirely forsaken the true faith. Mankind are far more easily frigh-

tened into what is denominated religion, than they are reasoned into it, and this the old saint well knew. We all know that there are more frightful tales portrayed in this last dream or vision, than in any other to be found on record; and at the same time so mysterious that the greatest biblical critics cannot explain it in consistency with common sense.

## PHILOSOPHICAL DIGESTS.

V.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KANT.

(Continued from Investigator No. 18.)

THE chief dogmas and peculiarities of this curious philosophy are now before the reader. In the foregoing statement, imperfect as it is, nothing material to a full elucidation of that philosophy has been omitted. I will now examine its dogmas, and subsequently venture a judgment as to the nature, as well as to the value, of its peculiarities.

If there is a *free reason*, independent of all experience and sensation, as Kant asserted, the metaphysical system he took such pains to construct, may stand; if there is no such free reason, it must fall. That dogma is to the Critical Philosophy, what a key-stone is to its arch. Remove the key-stone, you endanger the arch; set aside, as contrary to reason, *pure* or *practical*, the dogma that *there is in man a free reason, independent of all sensation*, and the philosophy of Kant is shaken to its foundations.

This dogma, like every other, if *true*, is in perfect harmony with all known facts; if *false*, an appeal to those facts will warrant us in rejecting it. The question, then, is, do facts declare for or against that dogma; do they warrant the conclusion of Locke, who ascribed all our ideas to sensations, or the antagonistic conclusion of Kant.

The *philosophy of sensation*, or that philosophy which lays down as indubitably true, that sensibility means life and life sensibility, *that* with the senses begin, as with the senses end our knowledge, *that* there is no other source of sensations than organised substance, the destruction of an organism involving the annihilation of its capacity to receive sensation, and *that* ideas themselves are sensations, of a character so peculiar as not to admit of explanation, but which, nevertheless, may be understood by all who will take the trouble to reason upon the sensations they individually experience.

Gassendi, Montaigne, Condillac, and Helvetius, rank among the ablest supporters of the *philosophy of sensation*. Our own Locke has written with great ability on the same question, and on the same side of the question too, the assertion of certain *immaterial* metaphysicians to the contrary notwithstanding. In that celebrated writer's "most general, as well as natural, division of the objects of our understanding," he thus expresses himself:

All that can fall within the compass of human understanding being either, first, the nature of things as they exist in themselves, their relations, and their manner of operation, or secondly, that which man ought to do, as a rational and voluntary agent, for the attainment of any end, especially happiness; or thirdly, the ways and means by which the knowledge of both the one and the other of these is attained and communicated. I think science may be divided properly into these three sorts:

1st, *Physics*, or natural philosophy. The end of this is bare speculative truth; and whatsoever can afford the mind of man any such, falls under this branch, whether it be God himself, angels, spirits, bodies, or any of their affections, as number and figure, &c.

2nd, *Πρακτική*, the right of applying our own powers and



actions for the attainment of things good and useful. The most considerable under this head is ethics, which is the seeking out those rules and measures of human actions which lead to happiness, and the means to practise them. The end of this is not bare speculation, but right, and a conduct suitable to it.

3rd, *Σημειωτική*, or the doctrine of signs, the most usual whereof being words, it is aptly enough termed also *Λογική*, logic. The business of this is to consider the nature of the signs the mind makes use of for the understanding of things or conveying its knowledge to others."

These extracts are made with a view to satisfy readers that Locke did as Madame De Stael affirmed, namely, ascribe all our ideas to sensations. What can those extracts mean, if they mean not that the understanding, that is the brain, must have an object to exercise itself upon before it can exercise itself at all. It is charged upon Locke by Dugald Stewart, that he thought *the understanding itself a source of ideas*. Now I can very well understand why Mr. Stewart and other immaterialists should be anxious to enlist the respectable authority of Locke in support of their intangible philosophy, but I cannot understand how the understanding can be the source of ideas, in other terms, be *the source of itself*. I have been assured that individuals really did jump down their own throats, but never could understand how they did it, and as little can I understand understanding to be the source of understanding. Understanding, or mind, is not being, but a word which signifies certain phenomena experienced by being. It is the pernicious custom of erecting this nonentity called mind into an entity, that more perhaps than any other cause perplexes and bewilders us. A writer on cerebral physiology, in that admirable journal, "The Zoist," exclaims, "What errors have been perpetrated—what time has been lost—and how stationary our science, because cerebral physiologists will continue to use the word *mind*. To rid ourselves of this word, or, rather, of the false idea it now conveys, is a work of no small difficulty. If the words *mind, understanding, intellect, soul, spirit, thinking principle*, &c. were received in the proper sense, if, in short, they were the universally recognised signs of phenomena peculiar to particular being, and not supposed to be signs of being itself, little or no mischief would arise from their use." Cerebral physiologists of the *immaterial* school, have perhaps done more to mystify plain truths and perpetuate the reign of gross delusion, than any other class of *scientific (?)* teachers. To their exertions society is mainly indebted for the perpetuation of the immaterial humbug. Few would have been found at this epoch so silly as to imagine it is not brain that thinks, but a "something amounting to nothing" that thinks, through the brain's instrumentality, had not those enormous quacks, who rejoice in the name of phrenologists, decked out the fallacy in the gay and seducing colours of modern science. The writer in the Zoist, before quoted, farther says:

To state the subject clearly; the grand question for solution is this. Does the brain act *per se* in consequence of its peculiar organism? or does a something exterior to brain constantly compel certain portions of brain to exhibit peculiar properties? We never witness the evolution of thought—the manifestation of a benevolent feeling—or a destructive propensity, independent of brain. The instant we detect the property we are morally certain of the existence of the structure; and if the structure is healthy, the manifestation of it is so likewise. The conclusion is thus forced upon us, that a peculiar organised matter is all that is necessary to produce the diversified manifestations of human and brute cerebration. To our view, this is as clear as the working of an algebraic equation. Is it consistent with any sound principles of philosophy gratuitously to burden science with an imaginary being the existence of which is not demanded for the explanation of a single phenomenon? There is no proof whatever that cerebration results from the action of an essence, or even

from the combination of an essence with cerebral matter. The belief in the existence of an external essence is a proof of the non-recognition of the laws we have referred to—is a remnant of the belief which existed when imagination, instead of inductive reasoning, dictated principles of philosophy. THE BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF "MIND" IS AN EXEMPLIFICATION OF THE TENDENCY IN UNCULTIVATED MAN TO PERSONIFY ALL THE ACTIONS OF NATURE—is the barbarous recognition of the manifestation of a property resulting from a peculiar molecular arrangement of matter, and which arrangement necessitates the exhibition of the property. . . . The savage witnessing the movements of a steam-engine, in the depth of his ignorance concludes that the motive power is the Great Spirit. He does not see the steam—he is not acquainted with its enormous expansive power—neither can he be made to understand that this is perfectly under the controul of man, and that to obtain the movement he has only to fulfil the requisite conditions. In what respect does the philosopher differ from the savage? The philosopher witnesses the phenomena of thought, and acknowledges that the brain is essential to its production; but he is not satisfied with this knowledge, and because he cannot understand and see distinctly how these functions are produced, he, like the savage, has recourse to an external, unknown, invisible agent—to a spirit. Can greater ignorance be manifested? The philosopher feels the difficulty, but instead of using his best endeavours to unravel the mystery, he cuts the knot, and enlists a power which he has not seen and cannot appreciate, for the purpose of explaining phenomena, for which, as cerebral physiologists, we contend there is already sufficient cause.

There are many individuals who see the true bearing of this question, but who contend that there is no impropriety in continuing the use of the term *mind*, provided we clearly understand the meaning to be attached to it. But herein lies the difficulty. Shall we practise a system of delusion? Shall we continue to use the old phraseology when it manifestly prolongs the existence of a pernicious error? "To temporise with a known evil, announces either weakness, uncertainty, or collusion." It must be discarded, and we shall date the advent of a new era in cerebral physiology from the moment we cease to speculate concerning spirit, and confine ourselves to the investigation of organised matter. Let us speak in the language of truth—let us dare to utter our thoughts with philosophic resolution—let us use terms which will not require explanation—let us appeal to man's reason and not to his *imagination*, and most assuredly we shall reap the reward."

This is sage advice. It is sage because right to the great purpose of all honest teaching. If *soi disant* philosophers will persist in the use of words which are either senseless, and therefore convey no sense, or only a sense absolutely false, philosophy cannot be thoroughly purged of its fictional dross. Society owes much to those who conduct the Zoist for the manly, straightforward manner in which they have dealt with the abusers of words. Unquestionably the sooner we get rid of the terms *mind, spirit, soul, understanding*, and a score or two more equally deceptive, the better for all parties; except indeed, it be possible to affix a rational and definite sense to such terms (which, however, I very much doubt), for with all deference to the Zoist writer, there can be no impropriety in continuing the use of *any* term provided *all* clearly understand the meaning to be attached to it. It is precisely because all do not understand the term *mind*, as it might and ought to be understood, that it is objectionable. The same may be said of the word *understanding*, which Kant affirmed *was itself the source of ideas*. If he had said the *brain* is itself the source of ideas, and that the *brain* can reason independent of *all experience and sensation*, no one need have taken trouble to overset dogmas so glaringly nonsensical, for no individual with an ounce of undamaged cerebral mass, would entertain it for an instant. That no *thing* can act independently of *any thing*, is a truth, the bare statement of which is sufficient to convince all who grasp its meaning. Action includes the idea of reaction, action and reaction being confessedly equal. But *understanding* is not a *thing*, that it can either *act* or be

acted upon. As reasonable would it be to speak of motion or space as moving forces, as to speak of mind, which is only another species of nonentity, being itself the source of ideas. The source of ideas, in any intelligible sense of those words, must be material, in a word, some *thing*, as it is only some *thing* can act, or cause phenomena. No *thing* cannot be the source of any *thing*, nor can it be the source of ideas, for though ideas no more exist, and are, therefore, no more to be classed among *things*, than space and motion, yet it is from the action of things upon things, ideas are necessarily derived. When Leibnitz defined matter as *that which is capable of action*, he gave as complete and satisfactory a definition as it was possible to give. But if matter only is capable of action, mind or understanding is *not* capable of action, unless we are prepared to admit that mind is matter, an admission so outrageously absurd, that I do not think, if Bedlam were ransacked, any body could be found mad enough to make it. The man who should treat of motion and space as *things*, would be laughed at for his pains—with equal reason might those be derided who talk about the understanding being itself a source of ideas, the understanding, as already remarked, being no more a *thing*, than space or time. Kant argued most subtly about the marvellous ideas arising out of the *pure understanding*, when, in point of fact, there is no *pure understanding*, if by pure understanding we are to understand an understanding undervived from action. Now, though it is easy to conceive of matter without motion, motion or action cannot be conceived without matter. To avoid then the conclusion that what acts is matter, is impossible. But if matter alone can act, matter alone can react, and the understanding not being matter can neither act nor react. What then becomes of the dogma, that the understanding is itself the source of ideas?

(To be continued.)

#### ON THE SUPPOSED NECESSITY OF DECEIVING THE VULGAR.

AN admirable essay under the above title, by Julian Hibbert, has just been republished by the conductors of the "Library of Reason," for one penny. Nothing, perhaps, is more needed than a constant exposure of this ruling vice unhappily of the present, as of every age. When persons of superior attainments profess to teach, and at the same time deceive, the vulgar, the only way to counteract the evil is to strip them of their mask, and expose the truth of their countenance to all observers, whether considered by the light of the prejudices of the people as a beauty or deformity. This may be taken as a general rule, with exceptions in the case of some persons, who do not thrust themselves before the public, and wish to conceal themselves from the persecution of tyranny in power, then it would not only be inexpedient, but a cruelty, to deprive them of their disguise. So universally allowed is the necessity of deceiving the vulgar, that people practice it for the most part without knowing it. It is a rule of good society, to adapt yourself to the conversation of whatever set of men you may happen to fall into. A company of respectable people, when they meet together, are mutually employed in deceiving each other, if they were not, they would fall to and abuse each other. When applied to this class of people, and the curse is merely taken in the sense of disapprobation, the best thing Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount was, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Consequent on the general reception of this doctrine—the necessity of deceiving the vulgar—it displays the ignorance of children just coming into the world to believe what you hear. Children are necessarily taught

by their elders, consequently they not only believe what they say, but look up to them at first as oracles. How often it must happen to persons to have had said to them, on broaching a moral or religious subject, "Oh don't speak before the children"—or again, "I will tell you when the servants are out of the room." However, I take it the latter description of people have as much worldly wisdom as their masters, and do not allow their interests to suffer much, or are much humbugged in their perceptions, by the loss of the casual rays of enlightenment, which fall as crumbs from the rich man's table. Children very soon find out, if they have common penetration, that half what has been taught them by their parents, in the nursery, school, and college, was only intended to be believed by the vulgar, or certain capacities it was supposed fit for, and that it is a maxim among grown-up men and women, emancipated from their tutors and governesses, only to give credit to half what they hear. When a person dares to say what he is, and what he thinks, there is a universal cry—what a want of knowledge of the world—what shocking bad taste—and, if the offender against the decencies of society be a young man, and another wishes to screen him, he says, Ah, well, when he gets older he will gain more experience in the ways of the world. To hear some people talk of shocking society by speaking the truth, you might as well, according to them, stand stark-naked before the fire, with your hands behind you, in a *sworree*, as say you are an atheist. Men of the world, as they call themselves, who preach on the necessity of deceiving the vulgar, talk of making a sacrifice to society, that is, on the shrine of falsehood, perpetually offering truth as a victim. In fact, the necessity of deceiving the vulgar is no more than an old enemy with a new face—hypocrisy—only an odious title is changed into an aristocratic and apparently philosophical maxim. A wolf in sheep's clothing, has been a fable and a saying from time immemorial, which describes the form under which persons and opinions wish to be reconciled to the prejudices of people who are opposed to them. Julian Hibbert says, in this essay, "But the grand support of superstition is from those whose great interest it is to put down superstition. Physicians, historians, legislators, schoolmasters, newspaper editors, and political economists, are the most enlightened and useful of literati, and if properly united, for their own and the public benefit, might rule the world." Julian Hibbert, had he lived, would have seen still more extraordinary phenomena arising from combinations of "the supposed necessity of deceiving the vulgar." He would have been witness to a Strauss, writing the most memorable book of the age against christianity, and professing that he neither intended or did any harm to the faith of christians—that the falsehoods of scripture and the non-identity of Jesus were perfectly reconcilable to a divine revelation, which he terms christology. J. H. would have been a witness to atheists calling themselves pantheists, affirming that Jesus and Paul came into the world to preach pantheism—and that Spinoza was lost in the love of God. J. H. would have been a witness to radical reformers calling themselves christian chartists, preaching from chapels, assuming the title of reverends, taking for their texts "democracy in accordance with christianity," sprinkling their addresses to the people with quotations and examples from the bible, and even defending themselves before their judges under the shield of true christianity. He would have been a witness to socialists calling themselves rational religionists, which, abstractedly, is probably as absurd a description as possibly could have been given of the followers of any superstition. The imposition on the vulgar was still more glaring, when the objects of the society seem to have been political, and were to admit the professors of all religions, which however



ridiculous and however at variance with each other, were at once established as rational. The irrationality of religion in general, and its want of accordance with their social regulations having been previously shown by their founder, or may be inferred from the principles he propounded for the formation of his societies. J. H. would probably have thought the necessity of deceiving the vulgar had arrived at a climax, when he found a downright atheist desirous to clear atheism from the charge of being a bloody and brutal system, such as it was affirmed to be by the Rev. Robert Hall, by professing that he was a much better christian than Mr. Hall himself, in carrying the forgiveness of injuries to a much more suicidal extremity than ever was propounded in the views of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. This reminds me of many infidels, who are terribly afraid of the common calumny of christians, directed against their opponents, that people without religion have rejected christianity for the purpose of indulging freely in their sins, undisturbed by conscience. Consequently, these infidels, though they have shaken off the restraints of superstition, cannot follow reason as their guide in matters of morality, and in their intercourse with man and man, but must shape their conduct by the rules of christianity, and are ever thinking what the christians will say of them, and what good christians would do in like cases. Now, in support of the independence of atheism from all reference to religion, and as an answer to all superstitious cavillers, atheists should ever have in mind and mouth what Bacon says: "Atheism *leaves* a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation; but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an *absolute monarchy* in the minds of men."

Mosheim says, speaking of the fourth century, that it was thought "An act of virtue to deceive and lie, when, by such means, the interests of the church might be promoted." I am afraid, that not only the interests of the church, but the interests of societies, individuals, and opinions, are often consulted, at the expense of sincerity—they pretend to be what they are not, and give countenance to sentiments they do not entertain. As Mosheim remarks of the same deceitfulness in the fifth century: "Thus does it generally happen in human life, that, when danger attends the discovery, and the profession of the truth, the prudent are silent, the multitude believe, and impostors triumph." Too many people, when engaged in controversy, think themselves forced to do what St. Hieronymus pleads in defence of the fathers, "That they were obliged to say, not what they thought, but everything requisite to refute what the heathens believed." Julian Hibbert quotes to the same effect Beausobre: "Philosophers in their studies, out of them they relate fables, although they know well that they are fables. They do more, they deliver up to the executioner good men, for having said it." How many men condemn an opinion brought before the public, which they approve of in private, but it does not do, they say, to tell it to the people. I think with you, they say, but you go too far, and frighten people, and I am sure you do not wish to hurt the cause. When an individual among them enunciates an opinion a little in advance, it is quite amusing to see how the rest stand by like so many Pilates, with soap, bason, and water, ready to wash their hands of it. They stand in a sort of pillory, shivering in their shoes, at the first piece of dirt flung at them—they are all in such a hurry to get rid of the spot upon their characters. They all cry he is a fool, a madman, an idiot, a stupid ass, he is responsible for it, we do not agree with him, and in the extremity of their despair they throw themselves down in the slough of despondency, and on their knees beseech some god of terror, some Rev. Mr. Hall, not to think the worse of them for it. How many atheists are there rolling in wealth, who will not move a finger, much

more, will not give a penny to support a Paterson in the utterance of opinions which are the daily food of their own minds, which are their common conversation among their own friends, which they say constitute their own happiness, and without which they declare that mankind can never arrive at their own welfare in this world.

Mandeville said, "knowledge is the bane of priesthood," but declared that he did not allude to his own times. Julian Hibbert says, "And I am sure he would not, if alive, allude to this nineteenth century, for we see that our clergy has established everywhere schools of mutual instruction, as soon as it was found that, otherwise, the education, or rather the *bible-teaching*, of the poor, would fall into the hands of the dissenters." It does not appear to me that there is much or any difference worth speaking of between the roman catholic who teaches beliefs unbelievable, the essences of absurdity, or the protestant who tells you to swallow the bible, which it is difficult for the ignorant to expose in controversy with the learned. As to the right of the people to judge of its contents, or any other forms of faith, the pretence of the Reformation, David Hume seems to think protestant and catholics arrive at the same conclusion. The Scotch, who, from the Reformation, made reading the bible really fundamental, have been ever since the most ferociously-biggoted protestant people ever known. They produced such a brute as Knox—they gave to the eyes of the astonished world the spectacle of the puritans, real bible characters and gossellers—they guillotined the papists—they assassinated Aikenhead, the blasphemer—they now prosecute Robinson, Finlay, and Paterson, and put a bill-sticker into prison for announcing a lecture on prayer, from Mr. C. Southwell. The presbyterians of Edinburgh seem more anxious to recommend themselves to the socialists and infidels, than were the papists of Dublin. One of the books mentioned in the indictment against Robinson and Finlay, was "The Bible an Improper Book for Youth, and Dangerous to the Easily-Excited Brain." The statistics of madhouses, tell us that the so-called protestant right of private judgment, and the privilege of reading the bible, have made more people insane on the subject in this, than in any other, country. There is at this moment a work advertising in all the newspapers, by a late celebrated physician, Dr. Cheyne, which is entirely confined to a medical consideration of this national disease. Such a circumstance at once places us low in the scale of civilisation, and makes us as much an object of compassion to the rest of Europe, as the population of the pontifical dominions under the influence of malaria. But if the disorder be so prevalent in England, what must be the case in Scotland, where the people are so much more addicted to the use of the poison? Frenchmen, on the other hand, who are, and always have been, very ignorant of the bible, and only know religion from the instructions of their priests, conversation, sight, and hearsay, go before all the rest of the world in infidelity, as a national characteristic.

Joseph Hume, in his late speech upon education, tells us that the roman catholic government of Austria gives elementary instruction to all her people, while in the education of our people we hold a very low figure compared with roman catholic or protestant countries. Now it does appear to me that the people must be taught to read, before the bible is put into their hands to any purpose, before they can be able to judge for themselves, choose a religion, grow mad over it, or become infidels. Julian Hibbert seems to think that the fact of a written code of faith, whether bible, roman catholic missal, or koran, in the case of superstition, is a remedy worse than the disease. He says, "As to attempting to cure a people's vicious education by impostures, this is only perpetuating an evil, and perhaps giving it a yet worse direction. Mohammed may have cured the Arabs of idola-

try—but he inspired them with a principle of proselytism, which spread ruin over half the world, and by giving them a *written code of faith, he bound down their intellects for ever.* I must warn the conductors of the Library of Reason, that there are times of emulation among atheists to be kicked and cuffed, the rich bear morally the punishment of their opinions, and the poor personal chastisement and the destruction of their property. I am coming to a passage which may draw upon them the same remonstrances for admitting it into the Library of Reason, which the recommendation of assassination did upon the editor of the "Oracle." It may perhaps lead to the suspicion that they have been practising some of the *sacred arts* of deceiving the vulgar, and have introduced an interpolation of the text. Julian Hibbert, speaking of the dangerous consequences which often attend deceiving the vulgar, says, "I do not allude to any silly youth, who, when playing the ghost, may have been very properly run through the body by another youth, who would not be frightened." Now, I must say, I see in the circumstances of such a case as set down, a very unnecessary taking away of life. Not to be frightened, and therefore not to be injured, and yet to inflict the punishment of death, seems to me out of all proportion to the offence. The idiosyncrasy of Mr. Hibbert might bring upon us a chorus of bloody and brutal from deists, atheists, socialists, led by a reverend Mr. Hall. I am not one of those disposed to put the hardest construction upon a man's words, in a case not sufficiently stated to remove objections, though it may be the general rule, as some assert, "in guessing intentions, to guess the worst." In a case put hypothetically of political assassination, or examples to be made by those means of a particular class, I should not immediately conclude that those means were recommended for the redress of all injuries, great and small, though if I chose to misapprehend, I might suppose that private assassination in private life, for private wrongs, was meant, or the hiring of bravos was intended to be signified, as used to be done in former times, to get rid of a rival or make way to an inheritance. I would not imitate the ways of Peel and Brougham towards political opponents, who, in their eloquence, descending on the probable effects of the exasperation of a people towards those who deprived them of bread, got accused by the debater in one house and the lawyer in the other, of recommending in and out of parliament the private assassination of a prime minister on the merits of a sliding scale. But except some modern atheists, not in the category of Bacon and Hibbert, and afraid of what the reverend Mr. Hall said, I should think most people would agree with Julian Hibbert in the general principle of the right to resent injuries, and the expediency sometimes of taking upon yourself the execution of the natural law. The "Edinburgh Courant" says the police have done very properly in stretching the law to the utmost extent, and they hold up to imitation the conduct of Bruce towards Paterson. The recommending the abolition of legal justice, arises from the doctrine and practice of Mr. Jardine. He was allowed to say and do it with impunity, and of course his Scotch brethren on the bench and of police will follow his example. But I am of opinion, that if fortunately Paterson had been in the way, and had instantly and amply executed the wild justice of revenge on Mr. Bruce, the knight would not have been held up to honour, produced imitators here, and been cited in Scotland in order to get up a second crusade against Paterson and the freedom of expression. I am afraid that something of the sort will yet have to be done, or the ghost of a Bruce will follow Paterson wherever he goes, and if, according to Julian Hibbert, "Any silly youth, who, when playing the ghost, may have been very properly run through the body by another youth, who would not be frightened"—I say, the enormity of any insolent coxcomb or hoary villain

who plays a Bruce or a Green to Paterson, will much more deserve such a punishment than the silly youth of Julian Hibbert. In the present posture of affairs, to all I would address the advice of Julian Hibbert, towards the conclusion of his essay: "It is evident, therefore, that, for every individual of common sense to attack damatory doctrines and the other doctrines of licensed deceivers, is but a rightly understood system of self-defence."

W. J. B.

## THE GROUND OF SECTARIANISM.

We occasionally cast our eye over the sectarian papers and arguments; and habituated to reason, think, determine on the ground of first principles, and from direct induction, can but pity or be amused at the sinuosities and absurdities which strike our eye. They do not appear to understand the true ground upon which every one who believes the bible stands. He is at once required to believe no more nor less than it reveals; to abase reason to the foot of the throne, and natural affection to that of the cross. To believe all that is written, and to forsake all for Christ, are the two great lines and rules of religious action.

Now nothing can be plainer than the story of redemption. It is the humbuggery of the priesthood to talk of "abysses of adorable darkness," as it regards man; because, on supposition, light as to him has been thrown upon them. It is true, however, since his spiritual condition as to feeling, faith, and hope, is in the line of experience, that he can ascend, feel, know, and believe only as he advances—so that in this respect new wonders burst upon him, and suns of glory, as he ascends the heights of Zion, continue to rise. This solution solves all the difficulty, and at once enables a discriminating mind to account for the many inconsistencies in sectarian teaching.

We discriminate for them, and insist that the faith of divine dictation is always the same. It is the chart of all lands and oceans, spread before the celestial mariner. The lands, seas, countries, rocks, gulfs, and whirlpools—suns, stars, and skies—dangers and escapes—joys, sorrows, hopes, and triumphs are his only in experience. Now the faith of dictation is only the simple story. It is "so plain that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." But the faith of experience, coming only within the grasp of man and not angels, and of him who has it and not the natural man, is what angels desire to look into, and what of course the natural man cannot know. We thus clear the ground, and open our way to an open and full grasp, both intellectual and evangelical, of our subject. The intellectual is the faith of dictation, simply the story of redemption. And this, as we have shown, is not altered in its nature, because embraced in the gospels as the less in the greater. It is the first teaching, and being taught, is no longer a mystery, but known. Let us grasp it in a strong intellectual manner.

The story: That the three persons in the one Jehovah from eternity decreed the redemption of this world as separated from others—of man, as distinct from angels—and of the church or elect as a perfect whole, as distinct from the mass of mankind. The higher object, the church, in whose redemption, with price and power, all the attributes and perfections of the Godhead are shown, is the centre of divine love and glory. For this the world has been spared, and sin and sinners endured. For this was mediation, involving redemption as the greater does the less—and for this the atonement, involved in redemption as the less in the greater. All this was in plan, covenant, and certainty, before the foundation of the world. The one person is to take the



nature of man—yield perfect obedience in that nature—suffer and die—the next, is to beget him of our nature, not spare him, and not fail to reward him in raising him from the dead, and bestowing on him all the glory of the work—the last, is to sanctify, enlighten, and in creative omnipotency uphold, and in love. The one is after the event of incarnation denominated in truth the father—the one begotten, the son—and the third, the holy spirit. All this is made known in the narration of the story in the declaration of faith—and as one after another falls in with the work, with it goes on in experience of faith unto eternal life. What can be plainer than this? It is what an infidel can know. You all see that he does.

We come now to the more important part of our subject. We are writing especially for sectarians, because we truly compassionate them, and wish to do them good. We say, that we advance on the more important part of the subject, and solemnly aver that no sectarian has any right to depart in the least from the dictation of faith. This cannot change. Its lines of latitude and longitude, all its circles and diagrams, belong not to elliptic but circular motion; and all along through, the experience of faith can be as easily known as to the dictation of faith, as language can be read and understood. The moment opinion, sentiment, feeling, teaching, is advanced contrary to this, that moment reprobacy is stamped upon it; and simply because it is the teaching of Jehovah, and cannot be changed in the experience of his grace. Hence the child becomes the perfect man. We have now but little more to do. All is before us. Any one who can take six ideas in connection, and see and feel their dependence, can with us at once bring the argument to a close. Many of the teachings of sectarians are not in grasp of thought and line of dependence distanced a single word from the first rule of thinking and believing according to the dictation of faith. Nay, they are flat and absolute contradictions. Let us try them. We will, that the contrast may be seen, set them in opposition.

*The Dictation of Faith as True.*

There are three persons, individual Gods, in the one Jehovah, now to be worshipped as father, son, and holy ghost.

The son is eternal, very God, and begotten of our nature, very God and man, and to exist so, as to his person, for ever.

The holy spirit is very God, creates anew, and thus makes the believer a partaker of the divine nature, and in Christ.

Baptism is immersion in water, in the name of each person, and to preserve the unity of the faith you must be immersed.

The elect were personally and individually chosen in Christ from eternity—that is, “before the foundation of the world,” in purpose; the price paid; and the grace, power, and glory secured.

Election and predestination are true, because necessarily involved as the less in the greater; and because so affirmed.

Thus we see the gross absurdity and inconsistency of sectarianism. It leaves the dictation of faith at the first step; and of course all its teaching, after that, is false. The plea, that all tend to the same thing—that is, “a holy life,” is absurd, because the holy life, as far as morality is concerned, has been attained by millions; and the holy life spoken of in the new testament is “a life hid in Christ of God, the fruit of faith, hope, love, and obedience wrought by the holy spirit subsequent to his new creation. We have great regard for an intelligent, kind, sincere christian—we do love him from our heart, soul, spirit, the same as we love moral and intellectual beauty in any object. Nay, we can go further—

*Sectarian Teaching as False.*

There is but one person, individual God, revealing himself in a mere man, and in what he calls the spirit.

The son is not very God, eternal in his nature, nor is he as man to receive divine worship after the work is accomplished.

The holy spirit is not very God but a divine influence—it is the word and our holy actions that make holy.

Baptism is not immersion, and we have a right to select our form, mode, or custom.

This is not true—the elect are only those who fall in and become holy—and the price, power, grace, and glory, are all conditional.

They are not true, but the teaching of the Devil, and taught only by perverting the scriptures.

What is affirmed of Jews and gentiles, is made specific as to individuals.

taking the dictation of his faith, and as far as we can, inferring what is the experience of his faith, we can, holding on to the robe of celestial light and love with which he is clad, love him as on the height of mighty effort to know, obey, and comprehend duty itself. But we cannot have fellowship with the sectarian, who, while he takes in his hand the chart of heaven, covers it at once with a blank and blotted map of his own device, and confidently affirms, as he pitches onward, under a narcotic influence, “This is true, this is the word of God, and this alone the way to heaven!” This sectarianism is false and abominably degrading. It calls for an instant denial of the divine dictation of God, and for a perversion through life; it multiplies delusions, creates the spirit of hypocrisy, prevarication, and deceit; it impoverishes and enslaves the land. Who can be depended on who denies the first teachings of God himself? and what must not be his moral obliquity who has through life endeavoured so to fold the chart of heaven as to see nothing himself, nor permit others to see, except what apparently confirms his falsehood, error, and delusion?

We now dismiss the subject—but before we do, we call upon sectarians to read and reflect. Dare you publish this? Why not? It is in intellectual benevolence. We have written just as if we believed the bible, and were contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Oh! that you could have the same spirit, when handling the argument of natural religion, towards those who reject the bible and believe only in a one God as seen in the things that are made or those who believe only in nature! We sincerely believe, such is the deteriorating influence of sectarian faith and feeling, that entering on the dictation of faith and its supposed influence, we could exhibit more of the real christian than is seen in the sanctuary. We should at least have the consistency of supposed truth to sustain, brightened by the outgoings of all that is grand and fascinating in the superstition itself.—*Boston Investigator.*

★ SOME CURIOUS OPINIONS,

DRAWN FROM THE WRITINGS OF DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS.

ALTHOUGH atheists do not believe in a providence, yet they do not cease to follow in very many cases the rules of honesty. They neither steal, nor murder, they abhor lying; they keep their promises; they detest unjust wars, and love peace.—*Becanus.*

In the early state of society, some wise men insisted on the necessity of darkening truth with falsehood, and of persuading men that there is an immortal Deity who hears, and sees, and understands our actions.—*Euripides.*

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# THE INQUESTOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found,"—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

NUMBER 23.

WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

## FOURTH BULLETIN FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

Edinburgh, August 22nd, 1843.

EVENTS are thickening upon us, with a rapidity almost bewildering. There is no mistake about the authorities here. Though certainly less prudent than Ulysses, they are valiant as Hector and wrathful as Achilles. May God have mercy on the infidels! for, of a surety, they will not. I have just returned from the police court, where a couple of "unresisting youths" were this day found guilty of placarding the city walls with the Man Paterson's bills, about which I must say a few words.

It seems that the Man Paterson's bookselling and binding business has been greatly improved, from various causes, but mainly through the unbought, yea, unsolicited, exertions of the procurator-fiscal, and the illustrious members of that august body, called city police. Well, the Man Paterson, though an atheist, is not altogether ungrateful, and resolved to show himself worthy of such kindness, by a public acknowledgment of its reception. This acknowledgment appeared in the shape of a placard, thus worded:

*"Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian."*

Thomas Paterson begs most respectfully to thank the *procurator-fiscal* for the patronage he has so liberally bestowed upon him, and sincerely trusts, by strict attention to business, and keeping constantly on sale at his shop, No. 38, West Register-street, a great variety of first-rate infidel works, to merit a repetition of past favours.

Thomas Paterson begs also to offer the city police his hearty thanks for the vigorous manner in which they "stretched the law" against his bill-stickers. His present limited means will not admit of his testifying his gratitude in so substantial a form as they may desire, but all he can, he will do; and if an occasional treat, in the shape of a "blasphemous" pamphlet, will suffice, they may command it at any time.

Thomas Paterson has nothing further to add, except that he has now on sale an excellent stock of books, such as the procurator-fiscal delighteth to honour. Amongst the rest, &c.

Then follows a list of books, whose titles were given in my last bulletin, to which I refer those who desire to know of what stamp they are.

The sheriff says that this complimentary bill is "undoubtedly blasphemous," and declared himself clearly of opinion, that Hamilton and Sanderson, by placarding the walls with copies thereof, committed a "monstrous nuisance." That the people of Edinburgh thought with him, was satisfactorily proved, he said, by the evidence of two policemen, who told him so. He further observed, however, that Hamilton and Sanderson were not charged with posting blasphemy, or with profaning the sabbath, by the act of posting on the Sunday morning, but with publishing a placard calculated to annoy all sober christians. For this offence he called upon them to find security for good behaviour (so long

as they both shall live, I suppose, no time being specified) to the amount of ten pounds each.

Post time has arrived, so I must needs defer all comments upon this notable police case till next week.

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

## SCOTTISH ANTI-PERSECUTION UNION'S

### *Appeal to the Friends of Mental Liberty.*

THE prosecutions lately instituted by her majesty's advocate for Scotland, against the vendors of works treating speculative questions, demonstrated the expediency of an immediate and cordial union among the foes of persecution.

The formation of a Scottish Anti-Persecution Union was the first-fruit of those prosecutions. That union is made up of individual professors of almost every kind of opinion—political, religious, and irreligious. It was formed for the sole purpose of setting free the tongue and the press; therefore, all who are persecuted for expressing, or otherwise publishing, their opinions, will have a legitimate claim to its support.

The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union will neither be a party engine, nor struggle for party or sectarian purposes. It will neither know nor care anything about opinions peculiar to individuals. If they are persecuted, the union will recognise and aid them, simply because they *are* persecuted.

The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union feels that the time has arrived when the friends of enlightened freedom must crush, or patiently submit to be crushed; when neutrality is nothing short of criminality, and not to act *for* liberty is, in effect, to act *against* it. Bigots in high places are crowding our prisons with victims. They are anxious, it would seem, to emulate the brutal intolerance of their ancestors, who in the name of a God of mercy, made scaffolds reek with heretical gore. Like those ancestors, they are eager to crush every individual who has the honest manliness to publish opinions hostile to established creeds and systems.

The religious or political creed that is rational has nothing to fear from opposition; but the creed, whether political or religious, that is *not* rational, has everything to fear from it; and therefore we behold the teachers of false creeds quailing before their opponents, like miserable culprits beneath the hangman's gripe. Christians are wont to boast the rationality of their creed, but in persecuting its opponents they act as though they thought it grossly irrational; and the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union must say, it is a reflection upon christianity, and a scandal to christians, that they are far more terrified by the arguments of infidels than ever were the pagans by the argument of christians. If christianity is divine, it will surely stand, let who will conspire against it; but if "a cunningly devised fable"—a religion invented by



men, as surely will it fall, though countless legions draw the sword in its support.

The people of Scotland have been taught to think that conscience-coercion was at an end—they have been cajoled into the belief that *their* rulers would scorn to dishonour themselves or their religion, by alliance with an odious species of mental despotism. But they are deceived—grossly, miserably deceived. Scotland is at this hour the scene of an atrocious warfare against dissent; a warfare commenced and carried on by its chief law functionaries, against the conscientious opponents of christianity. Scotland is still disgraced by persecutors; state hirelings who would “bring to one dead level every mind,” and, instead of conceding to all equal right, as regards questions of conscience, endeavour, by the infliction of merciless punishments, to awe dissenters into silence.

Friends of mental freedom! is it fitting, is it just, that any individual should be denied the right openly to express what he thinks true? be either bribed or terrified into silence, when his conscience bids him speak? To freely speak what we honestly think, is the most valuable of all human privileges. It is a privilege all demand, and surely it is a privilege for which all should struggle. Then rally round the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union. Sink minor differences, and come to the support of a great principle. You love sincerity—then why stand idly by and see fellow-creatures goaded into the practice of hypocrisy? Why, in the name of consistency, laud sincerity as the first of virtues, while permitting your rulers to punish the sincere as the vilest of criminals?

The inconsistency, as well as injustice, of those protestant rulers, who protect one class of protesters, while they persecute another, must be evident to the dullest understanding. The protestant principle is a sound principle, or the reverse; but the Scottish Anti-Persecution Union calls upon protestant christians, in the name of common sense, and common humanity, to at once throw that principle overboard, or honestly act upon it. Protestantism in this nation has assumed the presbyterian form. Here presbyterians may protest against Church of Englandism, popery, and atheism, not merely with perfect safety, but with honour. If, however, they take to themselves the privilege of protesting against episcopalianism, papists, and atheists, why should atheists, papists, and episcopalianism be denied the right to protest against them? If presbyterians were true to their avowed principles, they would as freely allow the atheist to express his atheism, as they now freely express their presbyterianism; nay, they would not only acknowledge his *right* to do so, but *guarantee him in the full and free exercise thereof*. This, however, they have not done. This is what they will not do, until a sufficient number of energetic individuals unite to put down persecution; or, failing that, to encourage, sustain, and protect the persecuted.

The Scottish Anti-Persecution Union trusts that the foregoing statement of the principle it was formed to vindicate, the objects it is struggling to realise, and the measures it has determined to pursue, though brief, is perfectly explicit, and will not fail to draw around it enlightened individuals of every class, condition, and creed. This once effected, all will be effected; for then money will be freely subscribed, and the union no longer be trammelled in its work of usefulness from want of funds. Let its friends provide *sineu*, and it will bravely carry on the war. That *sineu* is money, which has been truly said to find all roads open.

Letters, money orders, &c. to be addressed to Mr. Budge, Secretary, at W. & H. Robinson's, 11 Greenside-street, Edinburgh.

## PANTHEISM AND PANTHEISTS.

RELIGIONS, though various, and ever varying in form, are changeless in essence—though in appearance manifold, they are in substance one—though differing from themselves and each other in detail, they are, in principle, exactly alike. Between the pantheist, whose God is all—the theist, whose God created all—and the polytheist, whose hundreds of millions of Gods govern all, there are clear distinctions of detail, but no difference of principle—there are many appearances, but one and one only substance—there are all the forms Proteus himself was capable of assuming—but in essence they are without change or shadow of turning.

In pride, in reasoning pride our error lies,  
All quit their sphere and rush into the skies.

So Pope wrote—but he wrote falsely—for though all religionists do “quit their sphere and rush into the skies,” irreligionists do not. The monotheist, the pantheist, the polytheist, are ever reasoning thus proudly—atheists being the only individuals who are content to keep *this* side the skies. Pope himself was exceedingly prone to metaphysical skylarking, that is, teaching others what he had not a single rational idea about himself. A catholic by profession, and a pantheist of the Bolingbroke school by confession, he wrote *ad nauseam*, about God and other words, that none save individuals with a tolerable stock of “reasoning pride,” ever pretended to understand the meaning of. His “Essay on Man,” is made up of good rhymes and bad philosophy. There is not, perhaps, another poem in the English language, in which the licence allowed to poets has been more freely used. Some parts of it are execrable—while others are excellent. The sense and the nonsense actually doing what the Kilkenny cats are fabled to have done. The lines quoted above are from that essay. The sense of them is plain and sound. It is condemnatory of that almost universal insanity, which displays itself in idle attempts to explain without understanding, what is neither explicable nor understandable. But though Pope advised wisely, he was not wise enough to act upon his own advice. That essay, if not meaningless, means pantheism. Its author, like Milton, was ambitious to “vindicate the ways of God to man”—a noble ambition, perhaps, but one that smells strongly of philosophical quixotism. Pope was a genuine pantheist, the worshipper of a God, who

Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.

A strange God, doubtless, but certainly pantheistic. Pope gave great offence to monotheists of the orthodox school—for these latter worship, and say they believe in, an omnipresent God, who, nevertheless, makes no part of the omnipresent universe—a spiritual, not a material Deity, however—and, of course, view Pope's writings with suspicious eyes. No marvel either, as that which

Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,

can be no other than the universe, which, if allowed, leads directly to the door of atheism—for if the universe is God, God must be the universe, a conclusion atheists will be slow to reject—as orthodox theists boldly declare, that to say the universe is God, is only saying, in terms less calculated to shock popular feeling, that there is no God.

The learned John Bellamy, author of the “History of all Religions,” in a note on chapter I, of his “New Translation of the Holy Bible, from the original Hebrew,” thus writes :

"This word (Elohyim) could not possibly be understood by them (the most approved doctors among the ancient Hebrews before Christ, as well as the writers in the apostolic church, to the time of the council of Nice, 325 years after Christ) is any other than a singular sense; for as Elohyim, God, is the nominative to the verb *barra*, he created, whatever plurality there may be in the Deity, there can be but *one creator, one God*. Whatever multiplicity or variety there may be in the going forth of the divine idea in formative power, he is one *undivided substance, the source of all intelligence, the power of all powers, the creator of all matter*, who, by his creative efflux, gave being and form to all things, instinct to sensible creation, and understanding to man." Again, "There is one consideration which will relieve the mind as to this particular, and which commentators have passed over in silence, when they have attempted to define the word Elohyim. These writers in general seem to have forgotten that God possesses an attribute of which it is impossible for man to form any adequate idea! namely, *ubiquity, omnipresence*, that is, *present at all times and all places*."

How John Bellamy knows, or knew, first, that the universe was created at all—second, that it could not possibly have been created by more than one God—third, that he the creator is one, undivided substance, &c., I do not at present comprehend, and utterly despair of finding out. Then, again, as to his God's presumed ubiquity, if, as he himself confesses, it is an attribute of which it is impossible for man to form any idea, how could he know his Deity possesses such an attribute? Inconceivable attributes amount to no attributes at all, just as inconceivable Gods amount to no Gods at all. The man who talks of Being, or imagined Being, the nature or mode of whose existence, he has not the shred of an idea, talks wildly, worse than idiotically—for idiots, it will be found, have always *some idea* of the things or being about which they so incoherently talk. It was reserved\* for learned translators and great poets, such as Bellamy and Pope, to assure the world that there are ideas unquestionably true, though it is quite impossible for man even to conceive them. Bellamy is right when he says it is impossible for man to form any adequate idea of an Omnipresent Being, as we must first conceive of all time and all place, before we can conceive of such Being's presence therein, a conception highly improbable, if not impossible, not to mention the gross absurdity of allowing, as writers of the orthodox school needs must, that nature is not a phantom but a reality—that the matter which composes it stubbornly occupies space, to the utter exclusion of everything else from that space, while strenuously contending for an immaterial God, of course, therefore, not matter, who is, nevertheless, omnipresent, existing through all time and occupying all space. "There is no God but God" cry the mohammedans, and those who use it, silly and fanatical though they be, need fear no contradiction, it being obviously true that there is no God but God. No individual, however afflicted with the itch for dispute, could dream of disputing that, any more than he would the dogma, there is no triangle but a triangle, or there is no ass but an ass. The three dogmas being obviously true, that is, mere truisms, none are likely to call them in question. There is, however, a great difference between the first of these dogmas, and the two just given—forasmuch as that asses and triangles are known to exist, the words ass and triangle standing for portions of matter, when acting upon our senses in a definite manner—whereas, God is a *word*, which signifies anything, everything, or nothing—its meaning by each individual hearing or using, being determined according to the strength or weakness, purity or impurity, of his individual fancy. No two mathematicians differ in their conceptions of a triangle—no two costermongers differ in their conceptions

of an ass—whereas it would be exceedingly difficult to find any two believers in a God, or Gods, who agree in their conceptions of that God, or those Gods. Every mohammedan believes there is no God but God—every orthodox christian faithfully receives the same dogma—but I will venture to assert, that neither in the land of korans, nor the land of Jew-books, could two individuals be found whose ideas of the God they worship perfectly harmonised. The least instructed of mohammedans or christians, never fail to distinguish between circles and triangles, or asses and horses—but the best instructed of them would be puzzled to distinguish between idolatry and pure worship—or false ideas of their God from those which are true. This, indeed, is the characteristic of all religious ideas. The offspring of daylight imaginings, or midnight dreamery, they furnish nothing whereon the judgment can confidently repose—absolutely nothing which is not a positive insult to, because an imposition upon, human sense. Pautheism has the appearance of philosophy, when viewed from a distance, or through the false medium of antique mysticism—but it is a religion, neither more nor less than a religion, differing in its detail, its appearance, and its form from other religions, exactly the same, however, in principle, in substance, and in essence. When Pope assures us

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul,

he tells us what all genuine pantheists think, and no pantheist is prepared to prove. Those who contend there is a soul in man, distinct from, and, in a certain sense, independent of, his body, will find little difficulty in believing there is a soul in the universe, yet independent of that universe. Both doctrines are very old, and, in my judgment, foolish as old. Body thinks—men found themselves unable to solve so curious a phenomenon, and straightway cried, there is a soul in man which thinks, flattering themselves that by inventing the word *soul*, they had satisfactorily accounted for the phenomenon. In a manner perfectly analogous, they dealt with the universal difficulty. Observing the motions of matter, and their results, and being unable to answer the question, why does it move? they at once credited it with a *soul*, whose business was to push along the body of the universe, upon the same principle that human souls "keep moving the bodies of men."

That matter, universal or local, was capable of thinking and otherwise acting, without aids external or internal to itself, those "inventors of words to hide their own ignorance," never could satisfy themselves. The universe moves, said they, *ergo*, it must have a mover. Men, think, *ergo*, they must be tenanted by thinkers. The universe-mover has been called by names which cannot fail to please philosophers, who think variety charming. Pope, we have seen, boldly announced that the "stupendous whole" is made up of soul and body, the latter being nature, the former God—which, as already intimated, is the true pantheistic idea. No moutheist, properly so called, will tolerate the idea, that matter and God are two terms meaning the same thing. They reject with horror a material God. A matter God, say they, is no God at all—and in this particular, it seems to me, they are perfectly right—for that there is nothing, *not* matter, is the corner dogma of materialism, upon which, too, atheists chiefly rely, in justification of their rejection of the God idea. If, say they, matter is all, and all is matter, and if, moreover, matter ever was, and ever will be *all*, belief in an immaterial God involves logical contradictions. They call upon theists to produce the data upon which their assumption of such a God's existence rests—but though the call has been made at least a thousand times, the data has not been produced. It is true! atheists are repeatedly told by their opponents that



the universe must have had a creator, because it was created—that it must have a governor, because it is governed—that it must have a preserver, because it is preserved, and so on—but then, they have failed to adduce convincing evidence, or, at all events, evidence sufficient to convince any save those who have no doubts, that the universe ever was created—and failing that they fail in all—as it is ridiculously idle to talk about the universe being preserved or governed, until creation is proved a fact—for an uncreated universe excludes the idea of anything but itself—of course, therefore, the idea of a something which governs and preserves it.

John Bellamy, in the note above referred to, states his opinion on god and creation, with a broadness, as well as candour, really remarkable. His words are, "The scripture must necessarily be its own interpreter, and therefore, in order to silence the assertions of those who plead for the atheistical notion of the eternity of matter, we are informed in the sacred page that God created the very *substance* of the heaven and the earth, that is, the *matter*, including the elements of matter. Psalm cii. 25, 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.' Prov. viii. 23, 24, 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning before the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth—when there were no fountains abounding with water.' This is a sufficient answer to all those who have said there was an *external chaos*, or deep, or mass, of crude matter out of which God created the heaven and the earth. For we find that the pre-existence both of *matter*, and *chaos*, or the *deep*, are rejected by the inspired writers. It appears, therefore, that God was the creator of the very materials or matter of which he formed all things."

There is no mistake about Bellamy's writing, and for that reason I like it much. If rather dogmatic, its perfect intelligibility more than compensates us. He tells us plainly, that God *created* the matter of the heaven and the earth—and, as if to make assurance doubly sure, he adds, "including the elements of matter." Those who believe him who can, I *cant*. I am quite unable to conceive the creation of an atom—and the production of everything out of nothing is an idea far beyond my comprehension. The arguments used by Mr. Bellamy to help cloudily, and therefore sceptical, understandings, may be sufficient to satisfy believers in scripture, but I am sure they are insufficient to satisfy anybody else. For my own poor part, though all the world's books declared that everything was created by a being, not anything, out of nothing, I could not believe, for this plain reason, I could not understand. No man ever did or ever will believe true what baffles his comprehension. He may cheat himself into the belief that he believes, but it is mere delusion, nothing more than self-imposition. No parties are so dishonest to themselves as orthodox believers, those forward dupes, whose throats are ever open to receive such religious filth as dupers think fit to thrust down them.

Pantheists are not of this class. Their belief is far from orthodox; nevertheless, no belief is more repugnant to right reason. An opinion is generally entertained that a pantheist is an individual who confounds God and nature, in other terms, one who thinks that nature is the only God. No opinion can possibly be wider of truth, for though the word *pantheism* is compounded of two Greek terms, literally signifying *all God*, it will be found upon an attentive examination of pantheism, as taught by pantheists themselves, that so far from *confounding* visible nature with their invisible God, they take much pains, and display very considerable ingenuity, in the barren work of *distinguishing* between nature and God, or *matter*, and which, according to them, is inseparable from it. Indeed, let those who say there is no God but matter, call themselves pantheists or any other safe, respectable name, if

they please, atheists is the name which properly belongs to them; for how can any individuals be *with* God in the world, if they deny the rationality of believing in anything *not* matter? Pope, we have seen, wrote as though he thought *body* and *soul* two words expressive of distinct and absolute, if not independent existences. He must have thought thus, or he did not write what he thought, as the lines:

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul,

evidently mean that nature is *one* existence and God *another*; than which, an absurdity more glaring, never poet or even theologian put to paper, yet, strange to say, Pope ranks among the most philosophical of our rhymers. He is oftener than any other quoted as an authority on philosophical topics. His authority, then, is in favour of the idea that *nature* is the universe's *body*, and *God* is its *soul*. Odd doctrine. Alarming as odd to the orthodox. One of the conclusions to which it impels its believers, is that matter eternally existed. Now the eternity of matter is a notion, which leads directly to the door of atheism. Bellamy denounces it as "an atheistical notion," and so should I, if orthodox; as it is, I simply announce the fact. He saw plainly that either belief in a god, or belief in matter's eternity, must give way. He saw, without the aid of atheistical spectacles, that the idea of a Being not included in the "stupendous whole," owes every vestige of its influence and *seeming* validity to the taken-for-granted fact, that it, the universe, or "stupendous whole," did spring from nothing at the will of nonentity. Yes, without doubt the Jews' God did *create* the very substance of the universe, did create the matter thereof—elements and all, or the Jews' God was, like every other God to which the study of nations has introduced us, neither more nor less than a *false idea personified*. I repeat my opinion, an opinion not formed in haste or at random, that the idea of an eternal universe is incompatible with the idea of an eternal God, the co-eternity or even co-existence of a "stupendous whole," with anything else, amounting to an *impossibility*. The universe may be an intelligent being, which of course may receive names by the score, but it is *impossible* that there can be a God, in, out of, or apart from, the universe. The whole includes the whole, and is the whole, or there is no sense in language, yet, in the teeth of that truism, a truism standing in no more need of proof than the truism that a triangle is not a square, pantheists gravely assure us matter is the body, God is the soul, of the universe, which amounts just to this, matter is everywhere, God, though not matter, is everywhere too. That prince of pantheists, Schelling, lays down as an axiom incontrovertible, that "*Things* are not only in degree, or through their limitations different from God, but *toto genere*"—an axiom few will comprehend, except the very few who are adepts at finding out what is past finding out. When God is found out—when what in the heavens above, the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth, that formidable name stands for is discovered, we shall all be in a fair way to comprehend the *things* and the pantheistic God, who we are informed is *toto genere* different from things—not merely in degree or through their limitations. The same writer has further laid down, that whatever relation things bear to God on other points, they are absolutely divided from him on this, that they exist in another, and he is self-existent or original—but this latter axiom is no nearer intelligibility than the former. "Your dull ass will not mend his pace by beating," and sensible of that, I shall no more "cudgel my brains," in the forlorn hope of extracting sense from such a heap of nauseating nonsense. Schelling was certainly a profound thinker, and eloquent writer—but a love of the mystical, has been the *Devil* of German philosophers—to that they have sacrificed simplicity always, and not seldom truth.

But the fault was not so much in Schelling as his subject. The ablest writer may be defied to make clear a philosophy, which is obscure by nature. Such a subject is pantheism. It is necessarily obscure, because based on principles purely assumptive, and dark as assumptive. It is necessarily absurd, because all its conclusions are drawn from premises, positively false, or at best, purely imaginary. It is necessarily mischievous, because falsehood is invariably so. Pantheism is, in truth, a senseless superstition—and pantheists may, without injustice, be ranged in two great sections—one of honest simpletons, the other of dishonest atheists.

#### THE METHUSALAHS OF ANTIQUITY.

IN the fifth chapter of Genesis, we have an account of nine persons whose ages far surpass the ordinary life of man in modern times. Supernatural theology delights in the marvellous; it seeks to plunge the human mind into the depth of difficulties, and surround it with inextricable mysteries. Six of the persons named in this chapter are said to have lived, each of them, more than 900 years—an incredible protraction of human life; and unless it had been supported by irrefutable testimony, or, by evidence bearing some analogy to the laws and facts of the physical world, it is unworthy the serious belief of any one pretending to rationality. It is true, that the life of man may vary in many respects in different ages and countries, and its duration may partake visibly of this variation; but not to the extent mentioned in this chapter. Climate, modes of living, and many other circumstances may contribute to extend or shorten the period of human existence. In Sweden, for instance, a high and healthy country, the inhabitants are said to be remarkable for longevity. It is not uncommon in that country to see ten persons together whose ages, united, amount to 1000 years—a great age, compared with the life of man in the tropical regions. But, after all, these venerable Swedes are mere children when set off against the Methusalahs of antiquity. There is a vast difference between 100 years and 960; so great a difference, that if the one be supported by substantial proof, the other carries on its face the marks of fraud or of fiction.

But religious fanaticism is a kind of immoral phantom, that claims the right of telling lies for the "glory of God," and for the advancement of its nefarious and detestable purposes. Luxury and intemperance, in civilised countries, have, undoubtedly, in many instances, contributed to shorten the duration of human life; while want, inclemency, famine, and an unprotected condition, have left the savage in a state not more favourable to the protraction of his existence. When we survey, however, the history of man, his organisation, his physical and moral being, the nature of climates, and the facts furnished by constant experience relative to the duration of human life, we are compelled to pronounce this account of marvellous longevity to be an extravagant fiction of antiquity, inconsistent with the laws and ordinary operations of nature.

Some have had recourse to vegetable diet to explain the difficulty. But this, even were it true, would not answer the purpose: for we all know of individuals, and even parts of nations, who live wholly on vegetable food, and yet no such extraordinary effect is produced. Besides, it is not true that they lived on vegetables at that period of the world: for we are told that Nimrod was a "mighty hunter before the lord," and the whole history of the Jews proves that they dealt much in the blood of beasts as well as the blood of men. Savage nations are always carnivorous; and such was the case as to God's chosen people. The state of knowledge among them was at the lowest ebb, and their celestial illuminations gave them no pre-eminence over the rest of mankind.—*Boston Investigator.*

#### MONEY THE "MOTIVE" IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

ALL our great revolutions in religion and politics have been effected by pecuniary causes. The Romans were a nation of robbers, but we owe our origin to pirates. The Saxons by their address and courage on the highways of the sea, provoked perpetual war with imperial Rome, and the count of the Saxon coast, whose task it was to make them submit to order, may have checked, but could never altogether extinguish, our ancestors' energies in the pursuit of plunder. The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, distinguished themselves from the other northern and more inland nations, who were let loose on the Roman empire, by carrying on war more in the manner of banditti. No sooner were the Saxons settled, than they became a prey to their former neighbours, and found the total surrender of their property to Danish freebooters, better than exposure to the constant plunder and cruelty, consequent on the successive inroad of fresh barbarians into their country. Total submission only purchased an interval of repose, the more distant inhabitants of the world took up the trade, and made victims of their predecessors. It seemed as if the North Pole was at that time not made of ice but of humanity, and masses of men were loosed like a succession of icebergs on the devoted regions of the South, and when they were melted by their approach to the meridian of civilisation, fresh reappeared to resist its rays. The Normans far surpassed those who went before them, and made their name memorable by their enterprizes all over Europe. Their distinguishing excellence in this country was, that they were able to put this island into a state of defence, which has made it ever since able to resist all attempts at invasion.

Nor was this last conquest and great revolution in England effected without eliciting distinguishing pecuniary characteristics, in both conquerors and conquered. It was the parsimony of Harold which chiefly occasioned the loss of the kingdom to the Saxons. The family of Harold, the most wealthy of the nation, had long accumulated riches, and it was the fault of Harold that he could not part with his treasures to gain greater, even when his life and property were embarked in the issue of his enterprise.

Harold had a fleet equipped and ready to oppose the invading navy of the Norman, but in consequence of the ships of the latter being delayed by bad weather, and a report spread that he had deferred his enterprise till the next season, Harold, in order to save expense, immediately laid up his vessels, and disbanded his seamen. Harold had conquered the invading army of the Norwegians who had landed on the Northern coast in a pitched battle, but he refused the spoil to the soldiers, probably with a desire to make it defray the charges of the war. Such conduct alienated his followers, they deserted him on the road to meet the Norman, who had landed, and left him with unequal forces to face the enemy. His brethren and friends would have persuaded him to retire before superior numbers and protract the war. But to the Saxon death seemed preferable to the seeing his treasures wasting before his eyes, in the slow defence of his country and his crown.

The Saxons were told spent their money in debauchery, feasting and drinking in mean habitations, but the Normans built palaces and castles, which made it impossible for a foreign invader to subdue the country, and a task of difficulty for any internal authority to keep in subjection the holders of these defences.

The Saxons had shown that aversion to taxation which has ever since marked the British nation; there had been, in



former times, a fund raised under the name of danegelt, for the purpose of resisting invasion. This tax was always an object of national abhorrence, even when absolutely necessary, and had been abolished under Edward the Confessor. Harold does not appear to have attempted the levy of this war contribution, and the Saxons seem to have preferred the conquest of their country to incurring the expenses of its defence. Nor, when Harold was slain, did they recur to the sins of war—though the Saxon nobles astonished the Normans by their riches, they preferred the uncertain tenure of them, which they gained by temporary submission, to a partial sacrifice for the independence of their property and persons. Yet the Norman was plain-spoken—both in his preparations over the water and on landing, before the battle of Hastings, he held out to adventurers the partition of the conquered country, to induce them to follow him, and risk their means in the speculation; and on the eve of battle he held out to them unlimited division, as the prize of victory. After the battle came the time to act, and fulfilment followed the conqueror's promises—the Saxon nobles suffered successive confiscations, and the nation who, perhaps, expected to avoid it by their submission, were obliged again to pay the ancient imposition of the danegelt. The conqueror attached great possessions to the crown in the appropriation of church and lay property, and the country saw a succession of rich and powerful kings. Yet it is remarkable, that few of the Norman race were rightful heirs to the crown, the legitimate inheritors made the exception to the rule of usurpation, and nearly in every reign it happened that the possession of the throne was decided by the acquisition of the royal treasure. It is extraordinary and almost ludicrous to read the alacrity with which those who had a chance to the succession left the dying and the dead, to get first possession of the treasure of the deceased, while he, left to the mercy of strangers and mercenary attendants, was despoiled to his very garments, and found a difficulty in procuring the last offices to be performed over his corpse.

Nor, during his life-time, did the monarch on the throne find the disposition to cupidity less active in his successors—sons went to war with their fathers to dispute possession, and brothers, even in the life-time of their parents, commenced open hostilities, and the nearest relations despoiled, imprisoned, and even put to death each other in the contest for acquisition of territory.

More or less all the Norman kings owed their death to the desire of selfish aggrandisement. William the Conqueror, when in the pursuit of vengeance and fresh empire, by the check of a hurt in his belly, caused by the very results of his conduct. The happiness of Rufus's death was remarked by the people, as the vengeance of heaven on the love of hunting in the Norman princes, which made them sacrifice life and property to this propensity. Nor, if it be true, was Henry the first's death, by gorging lampreys, less illustrative of his family and nation's passion for excess, in their desire to have and to hold, terms we still inherit from them. Henry the second died of a broken-heart, at the thought of his children sharing the vast possessions he had made during his reign. Richard lost his life and empire, seeking to possess more of a paltry treasure than was offered to him for his share, and executing justice on a felon, who might have been left to the punishment of the police. John, however, had the merit of consummating the true English character, by sickening at the sight, and dying from the recollection of, the loss of his wealth, when really he had lost all it could represent. Like the miser who cannot exist, when he is deprived of what he never used.

Even the fanaticism and political revolutions of Europe, which moved the kings and people of the continent, did not

excite in the same degree the Norman monarchs and their subjects. When all the world was agitated by the crusades, these expeditions were treated more as stock-jobbing speculations in England. The Norman kings profited by the disposition of the age, in buying the lands of those who were disposed to engage in the expedition; and sometimes taxed their subjects, with the pretence of embarking themselves in the holy war; while the Jews and borroughs engaged in the traffic with the barons, of whom it may be generally said, that in resigning for a trifle their property at home, they thought to gain much greater abroad. However servile other nations may have been to the papal see, the Norman kings generally did not allow their superstition to affect their pecuniary interests. The conqueror seems first to have introduced the lay appropriation of church property, which he distributed amongst his followers, and, not contented with this preliminary confiscation, the Norman kings used to hold vacant benefices, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and, as they fell in, give each a turn of the revenues of these sees, to the royal exchequer. The church complained heavily of these deductions from their temporalities, and the kings promised amendment, in their charters, when they came to the throne, the terms of which they never fulfilled. The archbishops, particularly Anselm, before Becket, had used their best endeavours to make the kings give up this appropriation of the revenues of the church, but without success, and St. Thomas à Becket had the singular honour of dying a martyr in defence of the pecuniary emoluments, not the spiritual doctrines, of the church—a title to canonisation, and to rank among the saints which is perhaps alone held by an inhabitant and a Saxon of this island. In process of time, the revenues of the crown, gained by the conquest, and not long kept entire, diminished under a succession of exacting tyrants, was dissipated. Immediately commenced a state of hostility between all the classes which had or had not property, the king, and the barons, the borroughs and the people, the church and the Jews. The last, acting ever the part of their own scapegoat to all societies, were made the first victims.

The Jews under the reigns preceding Richard had been countenanced by the kings, who considered them as their servants, and levied at will from them, as from a private purse, what they drew by usury from the people. All politic princes upheld, and should have gloried in, such a well-veiled source of revenue, in fact, a species of national debt, held by the Jews, and at the service of government. But the Jews had incurred all this odium—all the estates of the kingdom were mortgaged to these money-brokers, who had, probably, made great gains by the crusades. Richard was the first and only British king who visited the nation with the calamity of being a crusader. Money, therefore, for present purposes, was his only object, and he felt no anxiety about the death of the goose with the golden egg. He levied severe contributions on his subjects, and made them some recompense by giving up to massacre and plunder the whole of the Israelites. By an equitable adjustment they carried the bonds and mortgages to the fire, and England was relieved from debt. The appetite for plunder was so great in the city of London, that not only did the populace plunder and set fire to the houses of the Jews, but eventually subjected to the same fate the property and possessions of rich Christians—for which some of the offenders met with punishment. The king declared himself the heir of the Jews, and made as many as he could responsible to him for the plunder, and the engagements which they had entered into with the Jews, and thought to have escaped from by their death. But Richard did not punish the murderers, but allowed his crusaders on their way to the coast, to put under the same sanguinary contribution, all the Jews they met in their course.

All the kings had more or less profited by confiscation of baronial property, by the resumption of grants—but Richard followed the latter expedient to a greater extent than any of his predecessors—and he has a merit of his own in the ingenuity of devising fresh means for obtaining money.

Finally, by his exactions, and, as was alleged, the evasions of the barons, who made the whole weight of taxation fall on the people, they rose in revolt, and their leader William Fitzosbert, or the long-beard, died the first martyr of resistance to taxation, and illegal methods of raising a revenue.

As long as there was money, nearly every king in existence had sworn to a charter, which was laid aside directly he was safely seated on the throne, and was in secure possession of all its revenues. But when the extravagance of Richard had dissipated all the resources of his future successors, and exhausted the patience of the nation, the barons reaped the fruits of the seed which had been sown by the unfortunate advocate of the people, Fitzosbert. They revolted against authority in the weak hands of John and Henry III.—refused to follow these kings to the field—lost nearly all the immense possessions in France, which had been left by Henry the second—were defeated in two pitched battles by the French—but repeatedly forced magna charta on the acceptance of their kings.

In these early times, the administration of justice was made a chief source of revenue by the Norman kings. Henry the second, to whom is often ascribed the foundation of our legal institutions, was the most accomplished in making them supply his wants. It is too long to explain how every dispensation of justice, how every suit of law, served to make money flow into the royal exchequer—besides the bribes which the monarch and the judges took from either party, the right or the wrong. Those who would wish to examine the truth of the assertion, need only refer to Lingard's Henry II., in his history of England, who enters minutely into all the details of the operation which converted law and justice into money.

It is useless to recount the rapacity of the barons, who, in their castles and the circumference of their domain, dwelt like spiders in their webs. But the inhabitants of the cities seem to have been equally prone to robbery, and the cockneys of London seemed to have followed it as a pursuit, and which, perhaps, they thought put them on a par with the nobility—but the sons of rich citizens were found to be engaged in, and some put to death, for the plunder of the houses of other rich citizens. The magna charta, which was forced upon the necessities of John, is more generally considered the source of our liberties, which defended us, and the nobles, or tenants of the crown, from taxation without their consent. But a more important item followed, from the desire to raise money, and which put it into the power of the subject more immediately to supply the wants or refuse a revenue to the ruler. Representation of boroughs was first established by Simon de Montfort, to support him in his authority, and perhaps to contribute to his necessities. But certain it is, that king Edward the first legalised this act, and admitted them into the representation only for the latter purpose. The crusades, we have remarked, seemed to be a matter of commercial speculation with the English, and the wars and conquests of England at this period, were conducted in the same spirit. The case of unhappy Ireland, very much resembled the invasion of America by the Spaniards. Henry obtained it as a gift from the pope, he did not proceed there in person, but allowed adventurers to make the conquest of the island, and then took upon himself the sovereignty. But neither he nor any of his successors ever thought of the proper government of the island, of which they were nominally the rulers, but agreeable to its first destination, left it

as a mine to be worked by their ruined followers. Conquerors without pay, and at a distance from legitimate authority, the conquerors, as usual, acted unjustly by the nation, who resented this conduct, and punishment followed this manifestation of their sense of oppression. This same circle of provocation, resistance, and justification for further injustice on the part of the original sinners, has ever formed the iron chain of events which has bound captive, and gone again and again to the soul of, unhappy Ireland. While successive swarms from this island have been enriched at the expense of their neighbour, and murder and stealth for six centuries have been their affirmative commandment, we, collectively, the richest people, exhibit, as our Irish dependants, the poorest population in Europe.

W. J. B.

(To be continued.)

## PHILOSOPHICAL DIGESTS.

### VI.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF KANT.

(Continued from Investigator No. 22.)

AGAIN, to say there is a *free reason independent of all sensation and experience*, is, in effect, to declare that we can as freely reason with, as without, brains—to assert that they can act without being acted upon, and reason independently of experience or sensation.

As well might it be urged that there is a *free will* as a *free reason*. The doctrine of a free human will is fast being abandoned by all reflecting persons. Philosophers have long felt it to be quite indefensible. Kant, we have seen, did what he could to save that doctrine, or rather to break its fall, yet with all his ingenuity he did much more to damage than strengthen it. When he announced that man neither existing in time nor in space, in relation to him the laws of cause and effect have no *logical* validity, therefore a free will is *possible*: he gave to the libertarian scheme a blow from which it is not likely to recover. So long as human nature remains human nature it will be idle to expect that men will believe that they neither exist in time nor in space, seeing we are naturally believers in the reality of those idealities. That we instinctively believe in our own existence, is shown by the fact that all do of necessity believe it. Time and space are certainly not existences, they are not things, but the ideas of space and time are nevertheless complete, clear, and interwoven with all thought. The order of things successive generates, as it has ever generated, the idea of *time*. The order of things existing generates, as it has ever generated, the idea of *space*. Leibnitz long ago established the truth of those propositions, and scattered to the winds old notions about the substantiality of space and time, though a Newton and a Clarke were ranked among his opponents.

Leibnitz denied the *objective* reality of time and space, which he considered to mean certain *subjective* conditions, or, as Kant subsequently expressed the same idea, they are only *the general forms under which man is allowed to view himself and the world*. The latter having shown the unreality of time, having, in short, denied its existence, he proceeded to argue that though every human action, as an event in time, must have a cause, and so on *ad infinitum*, yet the laws of cause and effect can only have place where time is, but as time is not, the laws of cause and effect are not—therefore, the idea of a *free will* does not involve a *contradiction*, and as the idea of a free will does not involve a *contradiction*, a free will is not an *impossibility*. Thus far, and no farther, did Kant conceive himself justified in proceeding upon his critical philosophy principles; so there he stopped, thus virtually aban-



doing the most ingenious attempt, perhaps, that ever was made, to reconcile the idea of a free will, that is, an uncaused will, with the opposing idea that the will, being an effect, must have had a cause. David Hume handled this thorny question with great ability, and I think with far greater success than Kant. His essay on "Liberty and Necessity" is very skillfully written. It is matter of astonishment to me that so little attention (comparatively speaking) has been paid to it, as it not only abounds with curious reflections, and valuable hints, but furnishes a complete answer to *free willers* on the one hand, and *necessary connectionists* on the other.\* The following passages therefrom are admirably reasoned:

I hope, therefore, to make it appear, that all men have ever agreed in the doctrine both of necessity and of liberty, according to any reasonable sense which can be put on these terms; and that the whole controversy has hitherto turned merely upon words. We shall begin with examining the doctrine of necessity.

It is universally allowed, that matter, in all its operations, is actuated by a necessary force, and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause, that no other effect, in such particular circumstances, could possibly have resulted from it. The degree and direction of every motion is, by the laws of nature, prescribed with such exactness, that a living creature may as soon arise from the shock of two bodies, as motion, in any other degree or direction than what is actually produced by it. Would we, therefore, form a just and precise idea of *necessity*, we must consider whence that idea arises, when we apply it to the operation of bodies.

It seems evident, that if all the scenes of nature were continually shifted in such a manner, that no two events bore any resemblance to each other, but every object was entirely new, without any similitude to whatever had been seen before, we should never, in that case, have attained the least idea of necessity, or of a connection among these objects. We might say, upon such a supposition, that one object or event has followed another; not that one was produced by the other. The relation of cause and effect must be utterly unknown to mankind. Inference and reasoning concerning the operations of nature would, from that moment, be at an end; and the memory and senses remain the only canals by which the knowledge of any real existence could possibly have access to the mind. Our idea, therefore, of necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity observable in the operations of nature; where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other. These two circumstances form the whole of that necessity which we ascribe to matter. Beyond the constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference from one to the other, we have no notion of any necessity or connection.

If it appear, therefore, that all mankind have ever allowed, without any doubt or hesitation, that these two circumstances take place in the voluntary actions of men, and in the operations of mind; it must follow, that all mankind have ever agreed in the doctrine of necessity, and that they have hitherto disputed merely for not understanding each other.

As to the first circumstance, the constant and regular conjunction of similar events; we may possibly satisfy ourselves by the following considerations. It is universally acknowledged, that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit—these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English—you cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former most of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to

discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations, and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records of wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician, or moral philosopher, fixes the principles of his science; in the same manner as the physician, or natural philosopher, becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them. Nor are the earth, water, and other elements, examined by Aristotle, and Hippocrates, more like to those which at present lie under our observation, than the men, described by Polybius and Tacitus, are to those who now govern the world.

Should a traveller, returning from a far country, bring us an account of men wholly different from any with whom we were ever acquainted; men, who were entirely divested of avarice, ambition, or revenge; who knew no pleasure but friendship, generosity, and public spirit; we should immediately, from these circumstances, detect the falsehood, and prove him a liar, with the same certainty as if he had stuffed his narration with stories of centaurs and dragons, miracles and prodigies. And if we would explode any forgery in history, we cannot make use of a more convincing argument, than to prove that the actions ascribed to any person are directly contrary to the course of nature, and that no human motives, in such circumstances, could ever induce him to such a conduct. The veracity of Quintus Curtius is as much to be suspected, when he describes the supernatural courage of Alexander, by which he was hurried on singly to attack multitudes, as when he describes his supernatural force and activity, by which he was able to resist them. So readily and universally do we acknowledge a uniformity in human motives and actions as well as in the operations of body.

(To be continued.)

It is not possible for a philosopher to conduct by reasoning a multitude of women, and of the low vulgar; and thus invite them to piety, holiness, and faith. But he must also make use of superstition; and not omit the invention of fables and the performance of wonders. For the lightning, and the regis, and the trident, and the thyrsolonechal arms of the Gods, are but fables; and so are all ancient theologies. But the founders of states adopted them as bugbears to frighten the weak-minded.—*Strabo*.

There are many truths, which it is useless for the vulgar to know; and many falsities which it is fit the people should not suppose are falsehoods.—*Varro*.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

## FIFTH BULLETIN FROM THE SEAT OF

### WAR.

Edinburgh, August 26th, 1843.

THE judgment of Midas earned for him a pair of asses ears—the judgment of Mr. Sheriff Macdonald, which I had barely time to announce in my last, fully entitles him to a similar reward. It is not, however, so much with his judgment I quarrel, as with the perfectly asinine reasons he gave for pronouncing it. The young men, Hamilton and Sanderson, stood charged with posting certain bills, printed by Paterson, which bills two policemen *proved*, that is, *asserted*, under oath, were an annoyance to *all* the respectable people of Edinburgh. This was every fragment of evidence adduced to prove that the bills in question contained offensive matter. Now, I presume, the said bills were not offensive, because they were bills, or because Paterson's name was appended to, or appeared on the face of them, but because they set forth what nincompoops of every kind call blasphemy. The policemen had, or had not, grounds for declaring them calculated to shock public feeling. If they had, those grounds should have been stated, in other words, the obnoxious passages contained in the bills pointed out—if they had no grounds for such declaration, Hamilton and Sanderson should at once have been liberated. The sheriff said, there could be no doubt the bills were blasphemous, and his no doubt, with the no doubts of the two philosophers in blue, of course left all other good christians present without the phantom of a doubt. But here comes the ridiculous, the asinine part of this judgment—the judge had no sooner delivered himself of his anti-dubious sentiment, than he assured the prisoners that they were not brought before him for sticking blasphemous bills, nor was there any charge against them for sticking the bills complained of on the Sabbath morning, but merely for placarding the city walls with paper having printed matter thereon offensive to the inhabitants. Verily, these ARE strange reasons for calling upon the delinquent bill-posters to find caution to the tune of £10 each, or be imprisoned thirty days. The peace of God, is said to pass all understanding, and, of a surety, so do these reasons. I could have understood him had he said, young men, the bills you were detected in the act of posting, which yourselves confess to having posted—contain blasphemous language, are calculated to annoy the christian inhabitants of this city, and *therefore* I shall call upon you to find caution, &c., but to volunteer the declaration that the charge had nothing to do with blasphemy—that the court took no cognisance of the language on the face of the bill—and then to wind up by saying, the policemen had proved the bills blasphemous, and therefore of an obnoxious character, is a mode of *discussing* questions of police, which, if not novel, is quite unintelligible. Almost all the local journals have reported the case. The

"Witness" of Saturday, favoured its readers with the following version :

**BLASPHEMOUS PLACARDS.**—Two young men were apprehended on the morning of Sabbath, 13th inst., posting placards of a blasphemous character, and brought before sheriff McDonald, in the police court, on the following Monday, but were remanded till yesterday, when the parties were again placed at the bar. On the charge being read, both pleaded guilty to posting the bills libelled upon, but denied they were of a blasphemous tendency, or their conduct in doing so an annoyance to the public. Proof was led to show that they were the parties who had posted the bills, and also that frequent complaints had been lodged at the police office against their doing so. On being asked by sheriff McDonald if they had anything to say for themselves, one of them, apparently more hardened in wickedness than the other, in a speech of considerable length, and of a most blasphemous nature, went on to show that the work in which they had been engaged was highly commendable, inasmuch as they were acquainting the public where a class of works could be found that were in much request, and of the utmost importance to the inquiring mind. "The bible a dangerous book for youth," was one upon which he specially condescended to comment, and said he was quite prepared to prove it (the bible's) dangerous tendency. "God *versus* Paterson," was another on which he lavished his praise, and commented in language so horrible, that our blood chilled in our veins, and a burst of virtuous indignation issued from the assembled audience. He concluded his remarks by stating that, in the event of his being punished, he was more resolved than ever to pursue his infidel career, and exert himself for the propagation of his favourite doctrines, which, he was glad to say, hundreds in this city had espoused. The presiding judge, after listening with the utmost patience to an harangue which must have grated harshly upon his feelings, said, that however much they might think themselves entitled to pursue their infidel career, one thing was equally obvious, that they had contravened the laws of this and every other civilised country, which wisely protected the inhabitants from any such gross outrage upon their feelings and religion as that with which they were charged, and, partly by their own confession, found guilty. If one thing could aggravate the crime more than another, and alter his decision in the case, it would be the speech which had been delivered in its defence. He would not, however, on this occasion, suffer his feelings to interfere with his judgment, and the decision now would still be the same as if that speech had not been delivered, believing them to be mere tools in the hands of others, and not the principal agents themselves; and this being the first case of the kind brought before him in that court, the punishment which he was about to award was much lighter than it would have been in different circumstances. He would, however, warn them against following their wild pretensions, for the punishment next time would be of a much more serious description. He would now order them to find caution of £10, or go to prison for thirty days.

This report is accurate, so far as it goes. It omits much truth—but as it commits only a little falsehood, I shall not charge the Witness with forgetting a certain commandment, about not bearing false witness against one's neighbour. As to the burst of virtuous indignation, which we are told issued from the assembled audience, I certainly did hear a singular kind of noise, something between a snort and a squeak, issue in part through the mouth, but chiefly through the nasal organs, of some dozen individuals present, when



Hamilton, the young man "more hardened in wickedness than the other," made some very sensible remarks about police-office gods. With regard to "horrible language," which shocked the delicate sensibilities of our Witness, not myself being of the sensitive "nasty nice" tribe, "God-bethankit," it neither chilled my blood, nor excited my virtuous indignation. Nothing in a languageable form has chilled a drop of my blood for many years past—and as to the virtuous indignation usually displayed by christians, when their religion is attacked, I feel it not, being myself *minus* a religion, and valuing at infinitely less than nothing the religions of other people. The virtue of being indignant with my fellow-creatures, because they do not think as I think, or express their thoughts as I express my thoughts, I have hitherto failed to comprehend. The Witness, if *téle-à-téle* with me for a few hours, might, perhaps, convince me that this virtuous indignation, which the least virtuous are the most forward to display, is *not* the offspring of human nature's basest passions—those passions which convert cant, fanaticism, and fraud, into instruments of their gratification. The very editor of the Witness is a splendid specimen of the virtuously-indignant. His name is Millar. Now, mark, reader, the liberality and consistency of that virtuously-indignant individual. A few weeks ago, the advertisement of an oratorio, the profits of which were to be given in aid of that excellent charity, the Fever Hospital, was sent to him, with a view to insertion—but he positively refused to give the advertisement a place in the columns of his paper, because *the oratorio had been got up by catholics, and was to be held in a catholic chapel*. Most likely his virtuous indignation was strongly excited at the prospect of an act of charity being performed by catholic hands, and in a temple devoted to their superstition. So much for this "virtuously-indignant" man's liberality. I will now say a few words about his consistency.

The Witness, it is well known, is the leading organ of that christian party calling itself "The Free Church of Scotland"—a party long in open rebellion to legal authority, and a party which, more than any other religious party of modern times, has battled for the rights of conscience. This Millar is one of the leaders of that party, the chief among those newspaper writers, who, through thick and thin, have supported it, yet here we have him, with disgusting inconsistency, prating about "virtuous indignation," and his blood chilling in his veins, at the enunciation of heterodox opinions. Well did Byrou say, that "in these days the grand" *primum mobile* is *cant*—cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral—but always cant, multiplied through all the varieties of life.

Another police case, arising out of Paterson's proceedings, was settled on Wednesday. The "Edinburgh Observer," of yesterday, thus notices this *fortunate* affair:

**IMPORTANT DECISION.**—A few days ago, a young gentleman, Mr. Scott Moncrieff, when passing the shop of Paterson, the notorious atheistical publisher, who for some time past has been outraging public feeling, pulled down one of the obnoxious placards posted at the door. He was given into the custody of the police, for so doing, and the case came before Mr. Sheriff Tate yesterday, who decided that Mr. Moncrieff should find caution to keep the peace.

A friend who attended with this new candidate for fame, in the honourable warfare against infidel paste and paper, made a clumsy attempt to persuade the sheriff, that a vendor of indecent or blasphemous books (in his mouth these were convertible terms) placed himself, by the act of vending such, beyond the pale of the law, and might be dealt with summarily by any "virtuously-indignant" individual, or individuals—disposed to give a thrashing at the probable expence

of getting one. This was too much even for sheriff Tait—who shook his head, and knowingly said, "It wont do, it wont do, so I must call upon Mr. Moncrieff to find *caution* (caution) to keep the peace."

Thus has closed Mr. Scott Moncrieff's first campaign. The daring deeds of Bruce (I do not allude to Robert Bruce, the hero of Scotland, but Bruce the hero of London, who so successfully carried by assault one of the Holywell-street shop windows, and captured some bills) have excited in him that spirit of emulation finding caution can extinguish. Poor fellow, when the magistrate *pronounced*, he stared unutterable things, his singularly expressive phiz suggesting to me, as I dare say it did to all who saw it, the once popular query, "Does your mother know you're out?" and I am inclined to the opinion that nothing short of a full pint of whiskey will again screw his courage to the astonishing height it formerly reached. I am told he is employed, in some way or other, by the Duke of Buccleugh; if so the latter should be informed of his valorous deeds, lest his impetuous courage, operated upon by the spirit of whiskey, in conjunction with the spirit of christianity, should be productive of serious consequences.

These facts indicate much. They indicate that the agitation commenced by Scotland's lord advocate is strengthening instead of weakening, and promises to swell into a very pretty agitation. Fortune is showering her favours upon the Man Paterson. He is aided by his friends, and much more aided by his enemies. To the local press he owes a debt of gratitude he never can pay. Every week they advertise his "atheistical depot," without fee or reward. Well may Paterson say, it is better to be born fortunate than rich, for in his own person he is at this moment an apt illustration of its truth. Even the magistrates, from whom he had no reason to expect any large measure of assistance, have treated him handsomely. By ordering the police to tear down his bills, seize their posters, &c., they have done a considerable deal in the way of exciting public curiosity, and, as an infallible consequence, increasing the sale of heterodox works. Paterson ought, and I dare say will, if brought to trial, make them a suitable acknowledgment for such unwonted kindness.

Often have I been told it never rains but it pours, and now I do thoroughly believe it, for upon the top of all the other agitational and warring elements has come a Mr. Greenwell, an irregular parson, one, in short, who is heartily sick of every religion except his own, determined, therefore, to set up on his own account, and teach religion as it ought to be taught. It seems, from all the inquiries I have been able to make, that three months ago a desire to debate with Mr. Greenwell, about christianity and other topics, had been expressed by Mr. Jeffery, then acting for the Edinburgh socialists; a correspondence ensued, which ended unprofitably, Mr. Jeffery finding himself totally unable to come to such terms as Mr. Greenwell insisted upon. One, and indeed the main point of difference, concerned the printing of their discussion. Greenwell desired to print, but Jeffery, though I dare say at least equally disposed to follow so good an example, remembered that his opponent also insisted that there should be six nights' debate, and each debate to last three hours and a half, and coupling that circumstance with the fact that a *verbatim* report of such a lengthy affair would cost £10 or £50, he very prudently declined to meet Mr. Greenwell on such terms. Thus, so far as Mr. Jeffery was concerned, the affair ended, but the friends of Mr. Greenwell have since taken great pains to make the Edinburgh people believe that Jeffery had shrunk from discussion. This disingenuous conduct induced me to correspond with Mr. Greenwell, in the hope of either bringing him to debate, or, failing that, to leave neither him nor his friends any further oppor-

tunity to boast about their own prowess, and the cowardice of infidels. The two letters I sent to Mr. Greeuwell, together with the one I received from him, are subjoined, and with regard to the disgraceful epithets which it will be seen he applies to my conduct, I need say no more in self-defence, than that what he calls "disturbing a public meeting," consisted in simply demanding a yes or no reply to a plain question, which I had sent to him in writing, but which he was about to leave his pulpit without noticing, though he had announced by placard his intention to answer all written questions. And, as to the charge of demanding a public answer to a private letter, it is false, my letter being neither private in its nature, nor private in its object.

Edinburgh, 16th August, 1843.

Sir.—I am informed that some time since you invited Mr. Henry Jeffery (then acting officially for the socialists of this city), to debate certain important theological questions, but that he, from causes with which I am imperfectly acquainted, did not accept the invitation.

Presuming upon the accuracy of this information, and feeling convinced that public debates, whether oral or written, if conducted with talent, and in a spirit perfectly friendly, are calculated to spread truthful knowledge and add to the yet miserably small sum of human good; I take leave to say, that I am quite willing to pick up the gauntlet you have thrown down, in plainer terms, to publicly discuss with you at such time and in such place as may be found mutually convenient.

Being a perfect stranger to you (at least so I judge), you may desire, before meeting, to know something about me—all necessary information upon that head I will therefore proceed to furnish. First, I am, and have been during the last six or seven weeks acting officially for the socialists—their lecturer in short, and, to the best of my ability, defender against all opponents, and *specialty* religious ones. Second, I query the authenticity, credibility, and utility of any so-called divjge revelations, or any so-called divine religions, conscientiously believing as I do that all those religions and revelations are equally divine, and that the reasonings urged by their defenders are equally rational.

If, then, you desire debate, that desire may be gratified, at all events I shall throw no difficulties in the way of so happy a result, asking nothing more of opponents, political or religious, than "a clear stage and no favour."

A speedy reply to the subject matter of this note will favour, yours, &c.

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

Mr. George Greenwell.

Edinburgh, August 19th, 1843.

Sir.—I duly received yours, dated 16th, and will briefly correct a few misapprehensions into which I conceive you have fallen. 1. In the style of chivalry you inform me that you have taken up the gauntlet which I threw down. On this subject your information has been distorted, I never threw the gauntlet down, I merely took it up after it had been thrown down by your friends with great violence, time after time. 2. You inform me that you are imperfectly acquainted with the causes which led Mr. Henry Jeffery to decline the discussion. I regret this exceedingly, for as your friends have my letters in their hands, I presume the correspondence might have been at your service, and you would then have discovered what propositions I was willing to investigate, and what reasons I assigned for adhering to a definite course. I am a decided enemy to moonlight and bush-fighting, preferring daylight and the open plain. 3. In giving a concise summary of your unbelief, you tell me that all religions are equally divine, and that all the reasonings urged by their defenders are equally rational. With my present convictions I cannot return the compliment in refer-

rence to all the systems of infidelity, for having read some of your writings, I must confess that your sentiments are such that we could have no common ground to start from in a race after truth. I have formed the resolution never to discuss with any individual who does not hold the idea of God, in strength and joy, as a foundation principle. I conceive that every individual who has lost this idea is miserably wrecked in mind, for it is the cohesion of the moral world, and without it we are an anarchy of spirits, and life becomes a chaos in the room of a system. 4. You tell me that if I desire debate my desire may be gratified. It might seem that you imagined I was some intellectual or moral gladiator wandering through the *salvage wood* of society, in search of giants and griffins to encounter and destroy. You are mistaken. I do not desire debate, I desire truth, and I have sought it earnestly, with heart and soul, even to the loss of all things esteemed among men. Allow me, then, with all courtesy, definitely and finally to state that your invitation is declined: if I were accepting it, I could only go over the same ground which I have travelled in delivering six lectures, and this would subject me to the unpleasant imputation of *spoke, spoke*. I consulted my friends here on your proposal, and they all concur with me that the course which has been adopted is a good one, and that the ground we have taken must not be abandoned. I may as well state, in conclusion, that we contemplate publishing the lectures by subscription. If this should succeed, and they are assailed through the press, I will hold myself in readiness to defend them in a courteous and christian style against all antagonists. With that measure of respect which I feel towards each member of the human family, I remain sir,

Yours, &c.,

GEORGE GREENWELL.

P. S. I may just add, that your mode of disturbing a public meeting, by demanding a public answer to a private letter, was unreasonable, yea, disgraceful; and that fact alone (had all other things been agreeable), would have shown me that you were not the kind of antagonist which I would choose for a courteous discussion.

G. G.

Edinburgh, Sunday, 20th of August, 1843.

Sir.—Your reply to my communication of the 15th, did neither astonish nor disappoint me. It is precisely the reply I expected, and though rather objectionable, I feel bound to admit it is a reply every way worthy of you and of your cause.

For your candour in proclaiming your unwillingness to debate, I thank you. I thank you, also, most heartily, for throwing off the mask, by wearing which you had fondly hoped to frighten infidels from their propriety. Yes, sir, you now stand before the public a self-confessed poltroon, one of the many pugnacious christians who are ever ready to defend their religion where none are allowed to attack it—who love discussion when, like Irish reciprocity, it is all on one side, and uniformly act upon the safe maxim, that

He who fights and runs away,  
Lives to fight another day.

Belonging, sir, as your reply compels me to conclude you do, to this valiant section of Christ's army, I will not fight with you, because you wont let me, which I hold to be a sufficient reason. You have positively refused to meet me and discuss our differences, the grounds of your refusal are very remarkable. One, and, indeed, the main ground is, that I do not hold the idea of God, in strength and joy—which I consider to be an excellent reason why you should meet me in friendly debate. For if the idea of God is a true idea, and you hold that truth, it is your duty to make me wise as yourself thereupon, or at all events, attempt



to do so. Where there is agreement in opinion, discussion is needless, but the greater the difference of opinion, the greater the utility of candid and truthful debate.

You, however, think, or pretend to think, otherwise—so be it—the public will judge between us. In conclusion, sir, I beg to say, that when you credit me with “imagining you some intellectual or moral gladiator,” you credit me with imagining, what never entered my imagination. But I do imagine that you are anxious to distinguish yourself as a defender of christianity, without the courage every such volunteer champion is expected to possess.

I am sir, yours, &c.,

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

As Mr. Greenwell returned me this last letter enclosed in a blank sheet of paper, I suspect he did by no means relish its contents, and is bent on having nothing more to do with its incorrigible writer. Truly did he say I am not the kind of antagonist which he would choose for a courteous discussion.

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

## SECOND ARREST OF PATERSON!

Monday morning, Aug. 28.

Paterson has been again arrested. A second seizure of irreligious pamphlets was made, but the authorities were balked this time, for they found about five or six shillings' worth in all, *just sufficient, in fact, to give them materials for working up another indictment.* As half an hour has hardly elapsed since the seizure and arrest were made, I cannot say what amount of bail will be required this time, or, indeed, *whether he will be admitted to bail at all.* If not, the authorities will speedily find themselves in an awkward predicament, as several individuals have expressed their determination to act for Paterson, if any unjustifiable attempt is made to prevent him acting for himself. His business has much improved of late, and bids fair to become a very profitable one. The titles, &c., of pamphlets seized, are as follows:—

6 bills, Holy Bible and Beauties of ditto; 22 Investigators; 12 Oracles; 11 Library of Reason; 8 Bills of Conscience; 6 nos. of A Roll and Treacle for prophet Zekel; 2 Haslam's Letters to the Clergy; 4 Jesus Christ the Reformer; 7 Spirit of Bonner; 1 Efficacy of Prayer; 3 Home Thrusts at the Atrocious Trinity; 38 bills headed Thomas Paterson; 1 bill headed Under the Patronage of the Procurator-fiscal; 1 large placard, Member of Parliament's Opinion of Bible; 1 pasteboard placard, Oracle of Reason; 5 Holy Bible bills; 3 bills, Almost Thou Persuadest me to be a Christian; 1 Christianity a Failure; 1 Ought there to be a Law against Blasphemy; 2 Character of the Christian Priests and Ceremonies; 1 Essay on a Future State of Existence; 1 Holy Bible pamphlet; 1 bill, Prospectus of Oracle of Reason; 1 tract, Trinity of Trinities; 1 placard headed Caution; 1 do., headed Queries, taken from Investigator; 1 Board, which stood at the door, cost of which was 4s., various placards are on the board.

## ALKORAN AND THE MOHAMMEDAN RELIGION.

*ALKORAN* signifies, to mohammedans, precisely what *bible* signifies to Jews and christians. It is compounded of *al* the Arabic definite article and *koran*, a word derived from the Arabic verb *karraa*—which may be rendered either, *the reading*, or *that which ought to be read.* Some parties not knowing that the Arabic *al* answers to our *the*, write the *al-koran*.

Other names have been given to the mohammedans' *holy*

*scripture*, as *al forkan*, from the verb *faraka*, to divide or to distinguish—not as the mohammedan doctors say, because those books are divided into chapters and sections, or distinguish between good and evil—but in the same sense that the Jews use the word *peret* or *pirka*, from the same root, to denote a section or portion of scripture. It is also called *al moshaf*, the volume, and *al kitab*, the book, by way of eminence, which answers to the *biblia* of the Greeks—and *al dhikr*, the admonition, which name is also given to the Pentateuch and Gospel.\*

The respect in which *alkoran* is held by mohammedans, may be judged of from the fact that they deem him criminal who purposely, or even inadvertently, touches it—without being first legally purified, that is, washed in some fanciful manner. If, by any mischance, an individual touch the sacred volume, great is the toucher's consternation. The author just quoted says that, lest they should by inadvertence do so, these words are written on the cover or label, “*let none touch it but they who are clean.*” Manifest, and certainly not worth being told, are their other modes of showing respect for *sacred writs*, such as swearing by it—carrying it with them to war—never holding it below their navels—adorning it with precious stones—and very carefully keeping it out of infidel hands, that is, the hands of all who reject *al-koran*.

Every orthodox mohammedan believes that no human hand has written, what will bear comparison with the worst, or rather least, divinely written passages in *al-koran*. Mohammed him-self, who is said to have been singularly deficient as regards mental acquirements, had the tact to convert his own want of learning into a means of forwarding his ambitious projects, as may be seen at large in Dr. Prideaux's “*Life of Mohamet,*” where we are told that this defect, or supposed defect (for as to Mohammed's really being so illiterate as he pretended, I much doubt), was so far from being prejudicial to him, or putting a stop to his designs, that he made excellent use of it, insisting that the writings which he produced as revelations from God, could not possibly be a forgery of his own—because it was not conceivable that a person who could neither write nor read should be able to compose a book of such admirable doctrine, and in so elegant a style—thereby obviating an objection that might have carried a great deal of weight. And for this reason, his followers, instead of being ashamed of their master's ignorance, glory in it, as an evident proof of his divine mission, and scruple not to call him (as he is, indeed, called in the *koran* itself) “*the illiterate prophet.*”

This clever manœuvre of the prophet told well, it seems, for himself and his religion. No marvel either, for what is more natural than that a credulously-disposed race, such as the Arabians, a race literally hungering and thirsting after imposture, should conclude *al-koran* must have been written by something divine, when so easily persuaded it could not have been written by anything human? The Jewish or christian reader, who may be disposed to sneer at Arabian credulity, would do well to consider whether they themselves are one whit less credulous, one whit less the victims of imposture, or one degree nearer truth, in their conceptions of the inconceivable. It is indeed worthy the deepest consideration of those who would think soundly, that all *divine oracles* and *holy scriptures*, whether fabricated in the old or the new world, or the plains of Hindostan, the mountains of Judea, the sands of Arabia, or the wilds of America, have been equally extolled by their fabricators.\* All, according to those disinterested judges, are the books—incomparable in style—unapproachable in matter—inimitable in everything—as far superior to productions merely human, as unclouded sunlight is superior in

\* See Preliminary Discourse, prefixed to Sale's Translation of the Koran.

strength and brilliancy to the flame of a rushlight. Yes, *all* holy scriptures have this marvellous peculiarity, they are "themselves alone"—the principles they enunciate having nothing in common with ordinary principles—the evidence on which they rest their claim to subjugate human reason having nothing in common with ordinary evidence—indeed, there is no one ordinary circumstance connected with them or their strange eventful history—all is extraordinary—as remote from the loftiest sense, as is Saturn's ring from the loftiest bead.

Books have ever been the tools with which impostors work. Carpenters might build tolerably good houses, with no other instruments than their hands—but priests cannot build up, much less keep up a divine religion, without divine books. Where bibles are, no matter by what other names they may be known, there will be salaried priests to expound them. Once persuade men that certain books were written by a God, or, what is equal, by men divinely inspired, there will be no difficulty *then* in convincing them that those books are infinitely superior to any others. Mohammed had to deal with a people strangely enamoured of the marvellous—so had Moses. Mohammed either wrote, or got a book written, which he declared was written by Allah. Moses either wrote, or got a book written, which he asserted was written by Jehovah. All this is quite natural, I believe, and assuredly quite common. Legislators have always displayed great anxiety to obtain for their laws *divine sanction*—or, at least, to make the vulgar think they had obtained it. Therefore did Zimolxis pretend he had received from the gods, in a certain cave, those laws he delivered to the Scythians. Therefore did Epimenides pretend that, by favour of his Gods, he had slept comfortably for fifty years. Therefore did Numa Pompilius long secrete himself in a wood, where he manufactured those Roman laws, which he lyingly announced to the multitude of fools as having been delivered to him by Egeria, that unnatural, though strangely fascinating, nymph. Therefore did Minos, audaciously proclaim himself the son of Jove—and after remaining twelve years in a cave, come forth with a body of laws in his fist, which in the genuine spirit of a genuine priest, he divulged to the people as laws framed by his divine father. Therefore did Pythagoras, after two years rustication in a den, feign himself to have just risen from the dead, for the benefit of the living—and as he told them what they had been doing during his absence (his mother and wife having furnished him with the necessary information) no doubt existed as to the divine business he had been engaged in.

It is strange, that in the face of such facts as these, that Jews and christians should be so ferociously angry with Mohammed—as if he were the *only* ambitious adventurer who had made religion the ladder by which he mounted to supreme authority. They denounce him as the vilest of all impostors, and his religion as the most abominable of all religions. Arch impostor of Mecca, are among the softest terms they usually apply to Arabia's chief prophet—the religion he taught they stigmatise as a kind of bastard judaism—which came more than six hundred years too late into the world—and as to alcoran, those "seventy times seven" charitable religionists will not allow it a particle of merit. Their hatred of Mohammed, has evidently blinded them to his merits as a law-maker, and a religion-maker—and I am bound to say, that he has treated *revelations* in general, in a far more respectful manner, than Jews or christians have treated the particular revelation he and others took such vast pains to concoct. The Mohammedans are expressly taught in alcoran, that God did in divers ages of the world, give revelations of his will in writing, to several prophets, the whole and every word of which it is absolutely necessary for a good moslem

to believe. Just to show the extent of Mohammed's liberality, concerning sacred books, I may mention, that he declared one hundred and four of them not to be doubted. Ten, he tells us, were given to Adam, fifty to S th, thirty to Edris, or Enoch, ten to Abraham, and the other four being the pentateuch, the psalms, the gospel, and the koran, were successively delivered to Moses, David, Jesus and himself—which last being *the seal of the prophets*, those revelations are now closed, and no more are to be expected.

Other circumstances will be hereafter mentioned, which I think cannot fail to place the character of Mohammed in a more favourable light, than Jewish and christian sectaries have had the candour to place it, but alcoran has the first claim upon our attention.

The style in which it is written has been already alluded to, and I am now disposed to let it speak for itself, but before doing so will give the judgment thereupon of the learned author before quoted, who is one of the very few christian writers that has treated Mohammed and his religion with common fairness. He observes that the style of alcoran is\* "Generally beautiful and fluent, especially where it imitates the prophetic manner and scripture phrases. It is concise, and often obscure, adorned with bold figures after the eastern taste, enlivened with florid and sententious expressions, and in many places, especially where the majesty and attributes of God are described, sublime and magnificent, of which the reader cannot but observe several instances; though he must not imagine the translation comes up to the original, notwithstanding my endeavours to do it justice. . . . . Alcoran is universally allowed to be written with the utmost elegance and purity, in the dialect of the tribe of Korish, the most noble and polite of all the Arabians, but with some mixture, though very rarely, of other dialects. It is confessedly the standard of the Arabic tongue, and, as the more orthodox believe, inimitable by any human pen (though some sectaries have been of another opinion), and therefore insisted on as a permanent miracle, greater than that of raising the dead, and alone sufficient to convince the world of its divine origin."

Chapter 1† contains only five or six lines and those not worth quoting. Chapter 2 commences thus :

There is no doubt in this book, it is a direction to the pious, who believe in the mysteries of faith; who observe the appointed times of prayer, and distribute alms out of what we have bestowed on them; and who believe in that revelation, which hath been sent down unto thee, and that which hath been sent down unto the prophets before thee, and have firm assurance in the life to come; these are directed by their Lord, and they shall prosper. As for the unbelievers, it will be equal to them whether thou admonish them or do not admonish them; they will not believe—God hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing; a diunness covereth their

\* See Preliminary Discourse prefixed to Sale's translation, &c. pp. 46-7.

† The koran is divided into 114 portions of very unequal length, which we call chapters, but the Arabians, sowing, in the singular *sura*, a word rarely used on any other occasion, and properly signifying, a row, order, or regular series; as a course of bricks in building, or a rank of soldiers in an army; and is the same in use and import with the *surah*, or *tora* of the Jews, who also call the fifty-three sections of the pentateuch *sedarim*, a word of the same signification.

Some of the chapters having been revealed at Mecca, and others at Medina, the noting this difference makes part of the title—but the reader will observe, that several of the chapters are said to have been revealed partly at Mecca, and partly at Medina—and as to others, it is yet a dispute among the commentators, to which place of the two they belong.

Every chapter is subdivided into smaller portions of very unequal length, also, which we customarily call verses—but the Arabic word is *ayah*, the same with the Hebrew *oth*, and signifies signs or wonders, such as are the secrets of God, his attributes, works, judgments, and ordinances, delivered in those verses—many of which have their particular titles also, imposed in the same manner as those of the chapters.—See Preliminary Discourse, p. 44.



sight, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment. There are some who say, we believe in God, and the last day; but are not really believers; they seek to deceive God, and those who do believe, but they deceive themselves only, and are not sensible thereof. There is an infirmity in their hearts, and God hath increased their infirmity; and they shall suffer a most painful punishment, because they have disbelieved. When one saith unto them, act not corruptly in the earth; they reply, verily we are men of integrity. Are not they themselves corrupt doers? but they are not sensible thereof. And when one saith unto them, believe ye as others believe; they answer, shall we believe as fools believe? Are not they themselves fools? but they know it not. When they meet those who believe, they say, we do believe; but when they retire privately to their devils, they say, we really hold with you, and only mock at those people. God shall mock at them, and continue them in their impiety; they shall wander in confusion. These are the men who have purchased error at the price of true direction; but their traffic hath not been gainful, neither have they been rightly directed. They are like unto one who kindleth a fire, and when it hath enlightened all around him, God taketh away their light, and leaveth them in darkness, they shall not see; they are deaf, dumb, and blind, therefore will they not repent. Or like a stormy cloud from heaven, fraught with darkness, thunder, and lightning, they put their fingers in their ears, because of the noise of the thunder, for fear of death; God encompasseth the infidels; the lightning wanteth but little of taking away their sight; so often as it enlighteneth them they walk therein, but when darkness cometh on them, they stand still; and if God so pleased, he would certainly deprive them of their hearing and their sight, for God is almighty.

There is nothing more or less reasonable in the whole chapter than this terrible passage, for if true it is indeed terribly so, as regards infidels, who, we are told, "*God encompasseth; taketh away their light, and leaveth them in darkness; so that they shall not see.*" Poor wretches, who are deaf, dumb, and blind, because they doubt, and doubt because they are blind, dumb, and deaf. Surely, if mohammedanism is a divine religion, their plight is most horrible, as its author expressly declares "*God shall mock at them, and continue them in their impiety; they shall wander in confusion.*" He informs them also, that if God so pleased, he would certainly deprive them of their hearing and sight, for he is almighty—information far from comforting, methinks. Such doctrines are shockingly intolerant, but neither Jews nor christians can object to them on that ground, for the doctrines they believe divine are no less intolerant. Intolerance is the presiding genius of all religions. Christians have said "the wicked are more acceptable to their God than the unbeliever." Mohammedans say no more. If Mohammed damned all doubters, he only followed Jesus Christ's example, who if gospel lie not, promised damnation to all unbelievers. Mohammed taught that God hath sealed up the hearts and hearing of unbelievers, and are we not told the like by Jewish prophets about their God? Are we not distinctly told in the Jews' book, that Jehovah occasionally hardened the hearts of his "peculiar" people, and then, as it were in savage sport, damned them for having hard hearts? It is an error to suppose, as many misinformed persons do, that Mohammed taught a religion more intolerant in its nature than the religions we are told were established by Moses and Christ. Religions are the same in essence, the same in principle, and very nearly the same in practice, all the world over.

Chapter 3 opens with these words:

There is no God but God, the living, the self-subsisting. He hath sent down unto thee the book of the koran, with truth confirming that which was revealed before it—for he had formerly sent down the law and the gospel, a direction unto men—and he had also sent down the distinction between good and evil. Verily those who believe not the signs of God, shall suffer a grievous punishment—for God is mighty, able to revenge. Surely nothing is hidden from God, of that

which is on earth, or in heaven—it is he who formeth you in the wombs, as he pleaseth—there is no God but he, the mighty, the wise. It is he who hath sent down unto thee the book, wherein are some verses clear to be understood; they are the foundation of the book; and others are parabolical. But they whose hearts are perverse will follow that which is parabolical therein, out of love of schism, and a desire of the interpretation thereof, yet none knoweth the interpretation thereof except God. But they who are well grounded in knowledge say, we believe therein, the whole is from our Lord; and none will consider except the prudent. O Lord cause not our hearts to swerve from truth, after thou hast directed us; and give us from thee, mercy, for thou art he who giveth? O Lord, thou shalt surely gather mankind together unto a day of resurrection; there is no doubt of it, for God will not be contrary to his promise. As for the infidels, their wealth shall not profit them anything, nor their children against God; they shall be the fuel of hell fire.

During the reign of Henry the eighth, a young female, named Ann Askew, was cited before the then lord mayor of London, Sir Michael Bowes, to answer for her heresy, in denying the real presence in the sacrament. When Sir Michael said, "Young woman do you believe that the body and blood of Christ are really present in the sacrament?" "I have read that God made man, but I never read that man made God," was the reply; at which her judge demanded, in an ecstasy of rage, whether if a mouse were to eat the consecrated wafer, it would be damned? "What say you, my lord?" mildly inquired the unfortunate girl. "Yes, to eternal flames," exclaimed he. "Alas! poor mouse," rejoined she. And, alas! poor infidels, do I ejaculate, in answer to the fearful tirade against them in alkoran. Christians, be it observed, are just as infidel in the eyes of orthodox mohammedans, as are mohammedans in the eyes of orthodox christians—and I seriously recommend those among the latter, who think it safer to believe too much than too little, to try and believe mohammedanism true as well as christianity—for as the religion of Mohammed may be true, as there is, at least, a possibility of its being a divine religion, the safe plan is to believe it, though, certainly, the safest plan is to believe every religion—for he who can manage that, has nothing whatever to fear. If they are moonshine, why, no harm will come of it—but if one or more of them be genuine, why great will be his reward, in at least a couple of paradises, such as eye hath not seen, ear heard, nor the head of man understood. But it will doubtless be objected, that no individual, however gifted, as regards the "believing spirit," can think any two religions divine, seeing that no two of them agree even as regards those assumptions and doctrines which are fundamental to them. The objection is valid, perhaps, though my experience of really religious people has led me to conclude, that they don't know what they can accomplish in the believing department, until they fairly test their abilities. He who, with all his senses gathered about him, can believe, as the bulk of christians and mohammedans do, that the rejectors of their religions shall be overcome and thrown into hell, is certainly in a fair way to believe anything.

## PHILOSOPHICAL DIGESTS.

### VII.

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF KANT.

(Continued from Investigator No. 23.)

[Extract from Hume's Liberty and Necessity.]

HENCE, likewise, the benefit of that experience, acquired by long life and a variety of business and company, in order to instruct us in the principles of human nature, and regulate our future conduct, as well as speculation. By means of this guide, we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives, from their actions, expressions, and even gestures;



and again descend to the interpretation of their actions, from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations. The general observations, treasured up by a course of experience, give us the clue of human nature, and teach us to unravel all its intricacies. Pretexts and appearances no longer deceive us—public declarations pass for the specious colouring of a cause—and though virtue and honour be allowed their proper weight and authority, that perfect disinterestedness, so often pretended to, is never expected in multitudes and parties; seldom in their leaders; and scarcely even in individuals of rank or station. But were there no uniformity in human actions, and were every experiment, which we could form of this kind, irregular and anomalous, it were impossible to collect any general observations concerning mankind; and no experience, however accurately digested by reflection, would ever serve to any purpose. Why is the aged husbandman more skilful in his calling than the young beginner, but because there is a certain uniformity in the operation of the sun, rain, and earth, towards the production of vegetables—and experience teaches the old practitioner the rules by which this operation is governed and directed?

We must not, however, expect that this uniformity of human actions should be carried to such a length, as that all men, in the same circumstances, will always act precisely in the same manner, without making any allowance for the diversity of characters, prejudices, and opinions. Such a uniformity in every particular, is found in no part of nature. On the contrary, from observing the variety of conduct in different men, we are enabled to form a greater variety of maxims, which still suppose a degree of uniformity and regularity.

Are the manners of men different in different ages and countries? We learn thence the greater force of custom and education, which mould the human mind from its infancy, and form it into a fixed and established character. Is the behaviour and conduct of the one sex very unlike that of the other? It is thence we become acquainted with the different characters which nature has impressed upon the sexes, and which she preserves with constancy and regularity. Are the actions of the same person, much diversified in the different periods of his life, from infancy to old age? This affords room for many general observations concerning the gradual change of our sentiments and inclinations, and the different maxims which prevail in the different ages of human creatures. Even the characters which are peculiar to each individual have a uniformity in their influence; otherwise our acquaintance with the persons, and our observation of their conduct, could never teach us their dispositions, or serve to direct our behaviour with regard to them.

I grant it possible to find some actions which seem to have no regular connexion with any known motives, and are exceptions to all the measures of conduct which have ever been established for the government of men. But if we would willingly know what judgment should be formed of such irregular and extraordinary actions, we may consider the sentiments commonly entertained with regard to those irregular events, which appear in the course of nature, and the operations of external objects. All causes are not conjoined to their usual effects with like uniformity. An artificer who handles only dead matter, may be disappointed of his aim, as well as the politician, who directs the conduct of sensible and intelligent agents.

The vulgar, who take things according to their first appearance, attribute the uncertainty of events to such an uncertainty in the causes as makes the latter often fail of their usual influence, though they meet with no impediment in their operation. But philosophers, observing that almost in every part of nature there is contained a vast variety of springs and principles, which are hid, by reason of their minuteness or remoteness, find that it is at least possible the contrariety of events may not proceed from any contingency in the cause, but from the secret operation of contrary causes. This possibility is converted into certainty by farther observation, when they remark that, upon an exact scrutiny, a contrariety of effects always betrays a contrariety of causes, and proceeds from their mutual opposition. A peasant can give no better reason for the stopping of any clock or watch, than to say that it does not commonly go right—but an artist easily perceives, that the same force in the spring or pendulum has always the same influence on the wheels, but fails of its usual effect, perhaps, by reason of a grain of dust, which puts a stop to the whole movement. From the observation of several parallel instances, philosophers form a maxim that

the connexion between all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from the secret opposition of contrary causes.

Thus, for instance, in the human body, when the usual symptoms of health or sickness disappoint our expectation; when medicines operate not with their wonted power; when irregular events follow from any particular cause; the philosopher and physician are not surprised at the matter, nor are ever tempted to deny, in general, the necessity and uniformity of those principles by which the animal economy is conducted. They know that a human body is a mighty complicated machine; that many secret powers lurk in it, which are altogether beyond our comprehension; that to us it must often appear very uncertain in its operations; and that, therefore, the irregular events, which outwardly discover themselves, can be no proof that the laws of nature are not observed with the greatest regularity in its internal operations and government.

The philosopher, if he be consistent, must apply the same reasoning to the actions and volitions of intelligent agents. The most irregular and unexpected resolutions of men may frequently be accounted for by those who know every particular circumstance of their character and situation. A person of an obliging disposition gives a peevish answer—but he has the toothache, or has not dined. A stupid fellow discovers an uncommon alacrity in his carriage—but he has met with a sudden piece of good fortune. Or, even when an action, as sometimes happens, cannot be particularly accounted for, either by the person himself or by others, we know, in general, that the characters of men are, to a certain degree, inconstant and irregular. This is, in a manner, the constant character of human nature; though it be applicable, in a more particular manner, to some persons who have no fixed rule for their conduct, but proceed in a continued course of caprice and inconstancy. The internal principles and motives may operate in a uniform manner, notwithstanding these seeming irregularities; in the same manner as the winds, rain, clouds, and other variations of the weather, are supposed to be governed by steady principles, though not easily discoverable by human sagacity and inquiry.

Thus it appears, not only that the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature; but, also, that this regular conjunction has been universally acknowledged among mankind, and has never been the subject of dispute, either in philosophy or common life. Now, as it is from past experience that we draw all inferences concerning the future, and as we conclude that objects will always be conjoined together, which we find to have always been conjoined; it may seem superfluous to prove that this experienced uniformity in human actions is a source whence we draw inferences concerning them. But in order to throw the argument into a greater variety of lights, we shall also insist, though briefly, on this latter topic.

The mutual dependence of men is so great, in all societies, that scarce any human action is entirely complete in itself, or is performed without some reference to the actions of others, which are requisite to make it answer fully the intention of the agent. The poorest artificer, who labours alone, expects at least the protection of the magistrate, to ensure him the enjoyment of the fruits of his labour. He also expects, that, when he carries his goods to market, and offers them at a reasonable price, he shall find purchasers; and shall be able, by the money he acquires, to engage others to supply him with those commodities which are requisite for his subsistence. In proportion as men extend their dealings, and render their intercourse with others more complicated, they always comprehend, in their schemes of life, a greater variety of voluntary actions, which they expect, from the proper motives, to co-operate with their own. In all these conclusions, they take their measures from past experience, in the same manner as in their reasonings concerning external objects; and firmly believe, that men, as well as all the elements, are to continue in their operations the same that they have ever found them. A manufacturer reckons upon the labour of his servants for the execution of any work, as much as upon the tools which he employs, and would be equally surprised were his expectations disappointed. In short, this experimental inference and reasoning concerning the actions of others enters so much into human life, that no man, while awake, is ever a moment without employing it. Have we not reason, therefore, to affirm that all mankind have always agreed in



the doctrine of necessity, according to the foregoing definition and explication of it?

Nor have philosophers ever entertained a different opinion from the people in this particular. For not to mention that almost every action of their life supposes that opinion, there are even few of the speculative parts of learning to which it is not essential. What would become of *history*, had we not a dependence on the veracity of the historian, according to the experience which we have had of mankind? How could *politics* be a science, if laws and forms of government had not a uniform influence upon society? Where would be the foundation of *morals*, if particular characters had no certain or determinate power to produce particular sentiments, and if these sentiments had no constant operation on actions? And with what pretence could we employ our *criticism* upon any poet or polite author, if we could not pronounce the conduct and sentiments of his actors either natural or unnatural, to such characters, and in such circumstances? It seems almost impossible, therefore, to engage, either in science or action of any kind, without acknowledging the doctrine of necessity, and this *inference* from motives to voluntary actions, from characters to conduct.

And, indeed, when we consider how aptly *natural* and *moral* evidence link together, and form only one chain of argument, we shall make no scruple to allow that they are of the same nature, and derived from the same principles. A prisoner, who has neither money nor interest, discovers the impossibility of his escape, as well when he considers the obstinacy of the gaoler, as the walls and bars with which he is surrounded; and, in all attempts for his freedom, chooses rather to work upon the stone and iron of the one, than upon the inflexible nature of the other. The same prisoner, when conducted to the scaffold, foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and fidelity of his guards, as from the operation of the axe or wheel. His mind runs along a certain train of ideas: the refusal of the soldiers to consent to his escape; the action of the executioner; the separation of the head and body; bleeding, convulsive motions, and death. Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions; but the mind feels no difference between them, in passing from one link to another; nor is less certain of the future event than if it were connected with the objects present to the memory or senses, by a train of causes cemented together by what we are pleased to call a *physical* necessity. The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volition, and actions, or figure and motion. We may change the names of things, but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change.

Another kantian dogma remains to be noticed. I allude to the extraordinary dogma with respect to general ideas, or notions which, in the language of Kant, "Lie in our understandings as pure notions, *a priori*, at the foundation of all our knowledge." Some of these "radical notions" were enumerated in a former part of this Digest. The reader will remember that *quantity*, *quality*, *relation*, and *modality*, are thus designated by Kant, who assures us there are four principal *genera* of judgments, and that they are derived from the just mentioned "radical notions," called also the "four possible functions of the understanding."

Now, granting the radical character of these notions, and admitting that of them all our knowledge must be compounded, I do not see how they affect the *philosophy of sensation*—for though all human thought does concern *quantity*, or *quality*, or *relation*, or *modality*, or what Kant calls the *species* contained under each, the grand question between him and sensationists of the Gassendi school remains untouched, namely, whether those "functions of the understanding" are, or are not, derived from experience? Kant says, they arise out of the pure understanding, which seems to me to be saying nothing intelligible, therefore something very little to the purpose. Had he told us by what marks we might distinguish between pure and impure understanding, or had he taken pains to familiarise us with his individual conception of pure understanding, the road to his conclusions might have been shown smooth and easy. A *dictum* must be

understood before it can be either accepted or combatted. As, however, Kant spoke of general ideas, not derived from experience, in contradistinction to those which arise out of the pure understanding, I *guess* him to have meant that there are ideas in the production of which experience played no part. The best reply to which is furnished by experience itself, which unequivocally declares to us the important truth, that all our ideas, general or particular, are *derived*, and that *underlined* I say, or what Kant called *pure understanding*, is a *pure chimera*.

### SOME CURIOUS OPINIONS,

DRAWN FROM THE WRITINGS OF DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUALS.

THE various modes of worship, which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true—by the philosopher as equally false—and by the magistrate, as equally useful.—*Gibbon*.

Notwithstanding the fashionable *irreligion* which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interests of the priests and the credulity of the people were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation, the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the Gods; and sometimes, condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an atheist under the sacerdotal robe. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith, or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached with the same inward contempt, and the same external reverence, the altars of the Lybian, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.—*Ibid*.

The platonists and the pythagoreans held it as a maxim, that it was not only lawful but praiseworthy to *deceive*, and even to use the expedient of a *lie* in order to advance the cause of *truth* and *piety*. The Jews who lived in Egypt, had learned and revived this maxim from them, before the coming of Christ, as appears incontestably from a multitude of ancient records, and the christians were infected from both these sources with the same pernicious error, as appears from the number of books attributed falsely to great and venerable names.—*Mosheim*.

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# THE IRVINE STIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

EDITED BY CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

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WEEKLY NUMBERS AND MONTHLY PARTS.

TWOPENCE.

## SIXTH BULLETIN FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

Edinburgh, Sep. 4th, 1843.

PATERSON is again at liberty. When last arrested, it was generally thought that the magistrates intended to refuse all bail, and thereby fix him in the "stone jug" until the session—but the sheriff demanded no heavier bail upon the last, than upon the first, occasion, that is £60. This agreeably surprised Paterson's friends, who, misled by many-tongued rumour, fully expected that the sheriff would either refuse bail to any amount, or make it excessive. "Tis better as it is," though I much doubt whether the bail could legally have been raised to such an amount as would have hindered Peterson's friends from doing what they were bent on doing, namely, *have his body*—and as to refusing bail altogether, it would have been a dangerous step for any Scottish sheriff to take—not to mention the odium so malicious an exercise of authority would have called down upon the individual who exercised it. The sheriff did wisely in neither refusing bail nor making it excessive. Paterson's friends are now pledged for two sixtys, or £120, so that he is fast rising in value. Three months ago, his body, *ego* included, was worth something less than nothing, but the moment he was "patronised" by Edinburgh's procurator fiscal, £60 would not have paid for him, and now, oh, marvellous, his friends fancy him so much, that they would not allow him to slip through their fingers for double that sum. This is all owing to the comet, or to the magistrates—to the latter, I think, far more than the former—for they have done all mortal men could do to make Paterson notorious, and, of course, an important individual. Their conduct has indeed been extraordinary. Samson, with the jaw-bone of an ass, killed a thousand Philistines—but greater than Samson are these magistrates, for by dexterous use of the same weapons (having more than one jaw-bone among them) they have created more than a thousand infidels. Talk of heroes, ancient or modern, these magistrates, these christian warriors, are the true heroes—heroes who take the shine out of all heroes that ever did or ever can exist. Cadmus, we are told, after sowing the earth with dragon's teeth, was rewarded by a prime crop of armed men—but Cadmus can no more be compared with the heroic magistrates of this city, than can candle-light to sunlight. The simile is not worthy of the subject, but it is the best I can find. One matter more I must mention. Some wicked wags, jealous, I suspect, of the magistrates' heroic reputation, have been playing off a hoax upon them. It is well known that they pant for nothing so much as a victory over Paterson. He is the fierce dragon that these judicial St. Georges are ambitious to destroy—but such is the generosity of their natures, that they would rather tame or

subdue, than slay the creature—in other, and not metaphorical, terms, they would much prefer converting Paterson, to shutting him up in a prison, a hardened unbeliever. The waggish individuals referred to, no doubt were acquainted with these facts, and determined to enjoy a laugh at the magistrates' expence, by making them believe that Paterson had actually seen the error of his past life, and was resolved to "reform it altogether." Whether my surmises be right or wrong, certain it is, that a printed paper, of which a copy is subjoined, has been cried through the city by the gentlemen hawkers, and, I am told, has been very extensively circulated :

### RECANTATION OF THOMAS PATERSON, OF 38, WEST REGISTER-STREET,

*Showing his Miraculous Conversion from the horrors of Infidelity to the Glorious Truths of the Christian Religion.*

That omnipotent God, whose holy book I had slandered, whose blessed religion I had reviled, and whose very existence I had denied, has, in his infinite mercy, snatched my soul from hell, by opening my eyes to the truth, and showing to my long darkened understanding the awful precipice whereon I stood! Oh! little did I think, while reading, in a spirit of rebellion against God, his account of the miraculous conversion of Saint Paul, that I should myself be one day converted in a manner scarcely less marvellous! But, by the blessing of God, I have been turned from the error of my ways; and through faith in Jesus Christ, permitted to comprehend the mysteries of his holy religion; to flee to his cross for refuge, and be filled with joyful hope, that through his precious blood my soul may be purged of its sins, and prepared for that blessed state of immortality promised to all who sincerely believe his holy gospel. It was faith, fellow christians, unworthy and rebellious as I was, that God vouchsafed, which has turned my thoughts in penitence towards the lamb which taketh away the sins of the world; it is faith has taught me the saying, the glorious truth—more precious than rubies—that my redeemer liveth, and will pardon! Yes, it is faith has softened my heart, turned my steps from the paths of the infidel, and, with the grace of God, will enable me to war for the kingdom of Christ with far more zeal and unspeakably more joy than I ever yet did for the kingdom of Satan. Oh, ye infidels! hear my voice, be warned in time; close not your ears, close not your eyes, close not your hearts, but follow the blessed example Christ has permitted me to set you! Remember that I was an atheist, and that now I am humbled before almighty God! That I scoffed at the name and religion of Christ, but now adore my crucified saviour! having renounced the devil and all his wiles. Yes, christians of Edinburgh! I came among you a mocker at all religion, a despiser of Jesus, and a hater of God; but he who died for sinners, has plucked me like a brand from the furnace, and revealed himself to my spiritual eyes in all the bright effulgence of his glory! May the excellent minister of God's word, who through Christ was the instrument of my conversion, enjoy that peace which passeth all understanding, both here and evermore. Amen.

Oh! may I stand before the lamb,  
When earth and seas are fled,  
And hear the judge proclaim my name,  
With blessings on my head.

Almighty father of mankind,  
On thee my hopes remain,  
And when the day of trouble comes,  
I shall not trust in vain.



I now know well the power I trust,  
The arm on which I lean;  
He will my saviour ever be,  
Who has my saviour been.

Therefore through life I'll trust in thee,  
In death I will adore,  
And after death will sing thy praise,  
When time shall be no more.

THOMAS PATERSON,

*By the grace of God, converted to christianity, through the instrumentality of one of its ministers.*

Though this pretended recantation bears the name of Paterson, I am instructed by him to declare, that he is perfectly innocent as regards the precious production, and that if he has recanted, or written such a recantation, it must have been while dreaming a dream, which he is now too wide awake to have the least recollection of.

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

## THE ONE IDEA.

(From the Boston Investigator.)

IF we glance at the history and civilisation of the past, we shall find nearly every epoch of every country marked by the predominance of one idea. Whatever may have been the changes in government, faith, or social order, still, the prevailing idea was exclusive in its nature and sway. These ideas have varied in their nature as time and circumstance have exercised their usual influence, and we can see in the crumbling theocracies of Hindostan, China, and further India, and in the military despotisms of Turkey, Persia, and Arabia, the gradual decay of an idea, or principle, which must die before another can be introduced. The same result obtains in every attempt to engraft upon an old system, one in its nature diametrically opposite. Look at the disorder of the colonial despotisms of South America—they have introduced liberty and equality into an absolute despotism—the result is, licentiousness and disorder. The nations had not undergone the fever of decay which was necessary to eradicate their old blood and prejudices, and render them *acclimated* to a new atmosphere. This principle holds true in relation to individual, as well as national, existence. Why is a slave the hardest tyrant? Because he knows not the true idea of liberty—because bondage has unfitted him for any other state, without being *acclimated*. Suppose a nation to exist in a state of nature, nearly, or in the pastoral condition, and a powerful commercial and civilised people to come among them, and introduce civilised forms, virtues and vices among them—what would be the consequence? Where are the millions of savages which existed upon this continent but *seven generations* since? It seems almost incredible that such swarms of people could have faded away so rapidly, and leave but a mere passing glimpse behind!

But modern civilisation seems to carry upon its face the distinctive features and characteristics which distinguish it from the monotony of the past—for we should expect no less from so singular a prodigy, than the stupendous results of modern civilisation. It is, indeed, a mixture, a compound, an amalgam of all ideas, whether of government, faith, or society. "All the principles of social organisation are found existing together within it—powers temporal and spiritual, the theocratic, monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic elements, all classes of society, all social situations, are jumbled together and visible within it—as well as infinite gradations of wealth, liberty, and influence."

What has given to European civilisation this new and

mighty peculiarity? It is attributed by Guizot, to "christianity." How? He answers: "By effecting a change in the inner man, which ultimately effected a corresponding change in his political and social institutions." This result he regards as evident, notwithstanding the decline of the world immediately upon the introduction of christianity. Under the theory of the decay of old, and the introduction of new, ideas, the dark ages were the interregnum which succeeded the death of paganism, and which was the necessary consequence of the death of so extensive a system. But this degrades the church to a mere political or social institution, and reduces her claims upon our credulity to a level with the arrogant assumptions of a new theory on banking, or a new treatise on the slave trade. Guizot claims for christianity all that the most credulous devotee would require—and, under so broad a roof, we must seek for, and investigate, theology, as well as civilisation.

What, then, is the conclusion to which we must inevitably come, if the church, as a human institution, is the chief cause and source of the present civilisation of Europe? It is, that a false system of religion, founded upon, and sustained by, popular ignorance, has regenerated Europe—or, the system is true in its record, and just in its claims, and we must—*believe or be damned!* Let us then glance at the probable influence of this system upon the past, the present, and the future. If christianity is legitimate in its birth, it has laboured for eighteen centuries against humanity during that period, for the benefit of a series of generations not yet extant. During its tedious preparation of the race for the good that it is *ultimately* to confer upon it, what unnumbered millions have passed to death and hell! And this same creed is so multifarious in its nature and forms, as to disable the mind from choosing, from sheer *perplexity*, yet so exclusive in its requisition as to reduce all convictions of conscience, and all inductions of reason, to one rule (and that rule so narrow as to be absurd), so brutalising upon the fraternal spirit of humanity as to render its devotees *demons*, and so inefficient in its influence that it can never eradicate the most unnatural social institutions, even of a pagan origin; and is, besides, and behind all, a *mere individual conviction!*

When we hear a man like Guizot attributing to a creed like this, the present advanced stage of modern civilisation, we are impelled to ask such if he believes, in a literal sense, the story of Adam and Eve, the fall, total *depravity*, the record of the old testament, the *crucifixion*, and the reality and efficacy of *modern revivals?* &c. For as surely as two and two make four, all these are true, or a false religion has accomplished all the *good* he speaks of. If true, christianity is true in all the foregoing items; if false, it is what we affirm it to be—a humbug; one which has grown up in humanity upon the death of a worn-out system, and was aided by a secular organisation (as Guizot admits) which preserved it, although in a most corrupt condition, from the assaults of mohammedanism and common sense. We think no liberal mind will be troubled to decide which horn of the dilemma to choose, even though they should differ with one of the master minds of the 19th century, Mons. Guizot. MONTGARNIER.

## THE PART AND PARCEL FALLACY.

BY AN INVESTIGATOR.

Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land.—Hale.

It appears that Hale was not only the first judge who delivered the opinion from the bench that christianity was part and parcel of the law of the land, but he gave the reason, that "taking away religion, all obligation to government by oaths,



&c., ceaseth." The commissioners, in their sixth report on criminal law, May, 1840, give the same meaning to the expression used by Hale. They say, "The meaning appears to us to be, either that as a great part of the securities of our legal system consists of judicial and official oaths, sworn upon the gospels, christianity is closely interwoven with our municipal law." But the grounds of such an interpretation were stated by Mr. Thomas, the barrister, to have passed away, when the laws were changed, and it was no longer considered necessary to swear upon the gospels or to swear at all. The other interpretation of the commissioners is, "That the laws of England, like all municipal laws of a christian country, must, upon principles of general jurisprudence, be subservient to the positive rules of christianity." This latter proposition is completely destructive of the former, christianity contains very few positive rules, but it does this one, that you are to swear not at all, and that your conversation is to be yea, yea, and nay, nay. So that the securities of our legal system consists in subverting the positive rules of christianity, and thereby the principles of general jurisprudence. The person who endeavoured to do away with the force of oaths, and restore the principles of jurisprudence to common sense, and in conformity with the positive rules of christianity, was found guilty of blasphemy. Nearly all countries, of whatsoever religion, swear by something or other, therefore all our missionaries abroad speak in subversion of the laws, and go self-condemned by their own judges to whatsoever punishment foreigners may think fit to affix to such a crime. But in the most bigoted roman catholic countries, in pagan and mohammedan, we never hear of an instance (which would be their common law) of their authorities adjudging our missionaries to punishment for denying the truth of their religion, and, consequently, subverting the laws. Therefore, by our own showing, we allow ourselves to be the most intolerant country on the face of the globe. But according to this judge-made law Jesus himself would be guilty of blasphemy, he at one and the same time declared against oaths and the objects of them, their religion. He upset footstools, temples, altars, gold, gift, heavens, thrones, &c., he left them nothing to swear by, and told them not to swear at all, and for this double offence, death, the Jewish punishment of blasphemy, was the proper portion of the crucified felon. How our judges would have helped the false witnesses at Jerusalem—they must have had a special commission to get through all the crimes they would have laid to his charge, such a man as Hale would have been indeed "all hail!" in the assembly of the chief-priest and elders. But I have a mind to help these addled-brained lawyers and judges to a better interpretation of the nonsense they utter than they can give to it themselves. They might say christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land, inasmuch as it is allowed, and recognised by law, and being declared legal it must not be interfered with. The rights of private property are made sacred, the privileges of the highway are given to the public, and however inconvenient these may be to some, you have no right to trespass, or stop a man's carriage, or any other vehicle, as long as it is not prohibited by law. But religion is a spiritual affair, not one of our material interests, and therefore can only be injured by opinion, and the utterance of sentiments is the only crime against it. I should answer this analogy, by taking it up and saying, spiritual matters should be left to spiritual judgment, and should not be allowed to drop to such a matter of fact as the imprisonment of my person, or the confiscation of my property. It is rather hard when there is a court above to try these offences against God, that they should anticipate here below Christ's coming at the great assizes in the clouds of heaven, and quite contrary to the principle of English law,

that persons should not be tried twice over for the same crime. It was only in matters of belief that Jesus took the trouble of pronouncing the sentence of the law, that all who did not believe were to be damned. He did not foresee that a Hale would come, and, by the part and parcel fallacy, bottle his fire everlasting, and make his punishments temporal instead of eternal. Jesus was more magnanimous than we are, who make a denial of christianity a punishable offence—all that Christ did was to make the cock crow, cock-a-doodle-doo, when Peter said it was "all my eye and Betty Martin" to the maid-servant. Peter was not swallowed up as an example to all blasphemers, when he swore a great oath, and denied his master, but only began to blubber in chorus to the cock-a-doodle of chanticleer. This cock, no doubt, was inspired, as were the graves that were opened, the rock which split, veil rent, earthquake, and other manifestations of nature, at their maker being crucified.

In the above definition of the part and parcel fallacy we come to an issue, which prescribes what the law should be in matters of religion. Where religion is only opinion, let it be governed in all its transactions between man and man by those laws which regulate all the means of human communication. When religion becomes an overt act, such as parading the streets or meeting in churches, do not let it be considered as supernatural, but let it be regulated by all those laws which provide for the use of houses and highways and the assemblies of people. This is for the most part the law of the most civilised countries, and it is the only way to escape from open absurdity. As long as the legislature go upon the right of making laws to grasp spiritual nothings, so long must they ever fall into the asseveration of nonsense, resembling the contemptible part and parcel fallacy. We can give gospel for this; the Jews passed over all the other crimes of Jesus, but when it came to the mere intention of destroying the Temple, a regular Guy Fawkes's plot of blowing up the parliament house, they sent him to the gallows, as a type of the fate of all such disturbers of the peace.

## PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

BY THE INQUISITORS OF ANCONA.

THE following is a specimen of the sort of "peace on earth, and good will to men," likely to be brought about by that *religion of love*—christianity. It is the "Edict of the Holy Inquisition of Ancona," against the Jews. Many persons suppose that the inquisition has long been abolished, but this edict will show that so late as the 24th of June, 1843, it was in existence, and likely to continue in a flourishing condition. I beg the reader's attention to this sample of christian love towards the Jews:

We, Fra Vicenzo Salina, of the Order of Predicatori, Master in Theology, General Inquisitor in Ancona, Sinigaglia, Jesi, Osinio, Cingoli, Macerata, Tolentino, Loreto, Recanati, and other towns and districts, &c.

It being deemed necessary to revive the full observance of the disciplinary laws relative to the Israelites residing within our jurisdiction, and having hitherto without effect employed prayers and exhortations to obtain obedience to those laws in the Ghetti (Jewries) of Ancona and Sinigaglia, authorised by the despatch of the sacred and supreme Inquisition of Rome, dated June 10, 1843, expressly enjoining and commanding the observance of the decrees and pontifical constitutions, especially in respect to christian nurses and domestic servants, or to the sale of property either in towns or country districts, purchased and possessed previously to 1827, as well as subsequently to that period, we decree as follows:



"1. From the interval of two months after the date of this day, all gipsy and christian domestics, male and female, whether employed by day or by night, must be dismissed from service in the said two Ghettos; and all Jews residing within our jurisdiction are expressly prohibited from employing any christian nurse, or availing themselves of the service of any christian in any domestic occupation whatever, under pain of being immediately punished according to the pontifical decrees and constitutions.

"2. That all Jews, who may possess property, either in town or country, permanent or moveable, or rents or interest, or any right involving shares in funded property, or leased landed property, must within the term of three months from this day dispose of it by a positive and real, and not by any pretended or factitious, contract. Should this not be done within the time specified, the holy-office is to sell the same by public auction, on proof of the annual harvest being got in.

"3. That no Hebrew nurses, and still less any Hebrew family, shall inhabit the city, or reside in, or remove their property into, any town or district where there is no Ghetto (place of residence for Jews); and that such as may actually be there in contumacy to the laws must return to their respective Ghetto within the peremptory period of six months, otherwise they will be proceeded against according to the tenor of the law.

"4. That, especially in any city where there is a Ghetto, no Hebrew must presume, to associate at table with christians, either in public-houses or ordinaries, out of the Ghetto.

"5. That in a city which has a Ghetto, no Hebrew shall sleep out of the Israelite quarter, nor make free to enter into familiar conversation in a christian house.

"6. That no Hebrew shall take the liberty, under any pretext whatever, to induce male christians, and still less female christians, to sleep within the boundaries of the Ghetto.

"7. That no Hebrew shall hire christians, even only by the day, to work in their houses in the Ghetto.

"8. That no Hebrew, either male or female, shall frequent the houses of christians, or maintain friendly relations with christian men or women.

"9. That the laws shall remain in force respecting the decorum to be observed by the Hebrews who may absent themselves from their Ghetto, to travel in other parts of the state."

After laying down these monstrous rescripts, which we had hoped even the romish church would not have attempted to revive, and still less to re-clothe with authority, and arm with tremendous pains and penalties, the savage order is issued that these intolerant laws shall be read in each of the Jewish synagogues. It is added:

"They who violate the above articles will incur some or all of the penalties prescribed in the edicts of the holy Inquisition."

The vices to which religion gives birth are the meanest of all vices, and the atrocities committed with impunity in its name are atrocities without parallel. Holy garbs cover the deadliest corruptions, and the rottenness of men's morals may very accurately be measured by the purity of their religions. It is beneath cowl and surplice we behold malignity the most malignant, hate the most hateful, and hypocrisy the most hypocritical.

The pharisees\* said and did not, they laid on men's shoulders burdens "heavy and grievous to be borne," while themselves moved not those burdens with one of their fingers; they made broad their phylacteries and enlarged the borders of their garments, loved the uppermost rooms at feasts, the chief seats at the synagogues, greetings in the markets, and to be called of men rabbi, rabbi; they devoured widows' houses, and for a mere pretence made long prayers, compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, who, when made, was twofold more the child of hell than themselves, they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, while within they were full of extortion and excess, they killed some of the people's wisest teachers, some they scourged in

their synagogues, and some they persecuted from city to city; they did, in short, what ought not to have been done, and left undone precisely what ought to have been done. Such were the pharisees—those cunning Jew priests of a former age, and such are the christian priests at this hour. Christian priesthoods have ever been pharisaic in principle, spirit, and practice, ever spillers of wise men's blood, ever extortionate, proud, revengeful, persecuting, garnishers of righteous men's sepulchres, full of hypocrisy and "Like unto whitened sepulchres, which do indeed appear beautiful outward but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

This is a fearful picture of the priestly character, but true to the original. It is as like the christian pharisees of to-day, as it could have been to the Jew pharisees, who obstructed civilisation while giving alms, at the sound of trumpet, eighteen hundred years ago. All priests who live by the perpetuation of fraud—and where are the priests who do not?—are necessarily pharisaic. Undoubtedly the truest and best priests are the falsest and worst men. This sentiment is *illiberal* mayhap, but experience proclaims it true. Experience proclaims that the aggregate priestly character is a detestable compound of the meanest vices which stain human nature. Even their sincerity has a dash of hypocrisy in it, and the latter is of so peculiarly insidious a character, that it often imposes upon themselves. Rousseau declared he had never met with more than three christian priests who believed in a God, a declaration which I quote, but I do not subscribe to, as I have far too contemptible an opinion of priests in general to suppose them atheists. About the profundity of their hypocrisy I never was in the smallest degree sceptical. Their *master vice* is a strong, and seemingly unconquerable, disposition to persecute. The criterion of virtue has been placed by eminent sages in inflexible principle, and flexible rule, whereas priests have a virtue-criterion the converse of this, nothing being more flexible than their principle, or inflexible than their rule—their rule being to persecute, plunder, and cajole, when they have the power, that is inflexible; while their principle is so far flexible as to be constantly in harmony with their own interests. The inquisitorial edict which stands at the head of this article was doubtless framed by pious religionists of this stamp, men whose virtue-criterion is flexible principle and inflexible rule. I would answer with my head for the truly christian character of Fra Vicenzo Salina. He and his colleagues of "the chancellery of the holy inquisition," are, I know, as well as I know my right hand, proper christians of the *if-you-don't-believe-be-damned school*, and in pouring out the vials of their wrath upon the Jews, in confiscating the property of God's "chosen people," prohibiting them from employing christian nurses, or availing themselves in any manner of christians' service, in driving them from their homes under pain of being severely punished, and otherwise vexing them by ruthless persecution, they are only following the example of that God that they assure us was nailed upon a cross, like a common malefactor, for he imprecated curses loud and deep upon the devoted heads of those who had the audacity or misfortune to be sceptical as to the truth of his doctrine, or the divinity of his nature. Every christian ought to know that Fra Vicenzo Salina, in oppressing the infidel Jews, in heaping contumely and insult upon them, is only acting in harmony with gospel principles. It is in the books ascribed to Messrs. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that christians of every sect, holy-ghost-filled-fanatics of every faction, may find ample apology for their crimes against liberty. Great will be the indignation excited by this edict. Protestants will hold it up as another to be added to the fearfully long list of proofs that papistical christianity is the mortal foe of freedom. Indeed, this has been done in part already. The protestant

\* See Matthew's gospel, chap. xxiii.

press, at least that portion of it not yet in the pay of Pusey and his gang of unprotestantisers, are eloquently loud in their denunciation of this infernal edict. The "Morning Herald," of Tuesday, 29th ult., says:

This fierce outburst of popish intolerance seems to originate from the smouldering and inextinguishable fire, kindled by the inquisition in the days of Torquemada, and of the spirit of that horrible head of the holy office, it is eminently worthy.

I think so, too—there can be no doubt, in fact, that the spirit of Vincenzo Salina, is a spirit of which Torquemada himself would not have been ashamed—and most inconsistent, aye, and in danger of hell-fire, too, is the christian who loves not that spirit, for it is the very spirit of christianity. Did not Moses cause blasphemers to be stoned, without waiting for juries to determine what blaspheming consisted in, or who were the blasphemers? And why should christians shrink from imitating conduct *approved*, as they believe, by God himself. No *christian* can doubt that all Jews are blasphemers, for they "mock at the saviour, and heap insults upon his holy name." If it was just for the Jews to stone blaspheming idolaters in the time of Moses—why should Fra Vincenzo Salina be pronounced anti-christian, for now inflicting upon blaspheming Jews a far smaller measure of punishment? He is only dealing out to the Jews, what the Jews have so often dealt out to others—if not in *spirit*, at least in *extent*, far more merciless. Few are stupid enough not to know, that if the Jews were, by some unlucky turn of human affairs, to become again, as they once were, in an obscure nook of the globe, the dominant religious faction—that they would inflict a persecution fully equal to that they have experienced. It is the nature of religions to make men the incarnate images of fiends, whose existence they have fabled. Jews, mohammedans, and christians, are all essentially alike. There is little or no difference among religionists, taken in the aggregate. The aggregate of Jews are humble, tolerant, and even liberal, when weak—but give them strength—place power within their grasp—then calculate, if you can, their intolerant pride—mark, if ye are able, the boundaries over which their fierce bigotry will not pass. The Jewish religion is such, that a full and implicit belief in its divine origin is utterly incompatible with those lofty and generous sentiments which have so eminently distinguished thoroughly irreligious philosophers of modern, as well as ancient, times. The Herald tells us, that

This persecuting treatment must steel the Jews against a religion which can sanction such severities. It must suggest to thinking romanists, as well as suffering Israelites, that the faith which shrinks like a sensitive plant from contact with a foe, cannot be rooted in truth—that the creed which can only feel secure, by confining in a Ghetto those who reject it, cannot be a very sound one.

It is amazing to observe how writers for christian newspapers can make use of infidel arguments, and even infidel words, when the intolerance of some rival religious faction they are hired to unite against, is to be exposed. The Herald is a deadly antagonist of roman catholicism, and, day by day, exhibits most laudable alacrity, in the work of proving that "Persecution is an inherent principle of the romish faith, sometimes quiescent, at other times denied, but always prepared for action, when the crisis which demands it has arrived." Greek meeting Greek, is as nothing compared with christian meeting christian, for then comes the tug of war, indeed. Daniel O'Connell has taken more than usual pains, of late, to show that "the times are

out of joint" for persecution, that catholics, kind, humble creatures, do not want supremacy, would not take it as a gift, but merely desire to be placed on terms of equality in matters of faith and practice. The agitation scours with real or affected indignation, all idea of once more establishing in its "pristine purity" that catholic faith "once delivered to the saints." This cunning move has frightened the leading protestants of England, on whose behalf the Herald has taken up the weapons of controversy. That paper is the sworn enemy of roman catholicism, and the Ancona edict has furnished it with a very convenient peg whereon to hang some excellent arguments against that form of pure christianity. It is true, as already intimated, that the Herald argues just like an infidel, while deprecating the persecuting spirit of romanism—but what of that, infidel arguments may sometimes be made to serve a good protestant christian's purposes. The Herald says, the persecutions now suffered by the Jews in Ancona, must steel them against those who can sanction such severities. I say, and have often said, that the persecutions now suffered by the infidels of England, must steel their hearts against those protestant christians who sanction them. It is true the Jews are treated with greater harshness in Ancona, than the infidels are in England, but that is no fault of the Herald, and the party of persecutors of which it is the organ, who have demonstrated that it is want of power, not want of will, that restrains their savage dispositions. I tell the Herald, that protestants persecute no less vindictively than romanists—I tell him, that the protestant, as well as the romish, faith, "shrinks like a sensitive plant from contact with a foe"—I tell him, farther, that there are no sound religious creeds—not one which can pass, *unburnt*, reason's fiery ordeal—not one which contributes in the smallest degree to the happiness, the morality, or the permanency of society—and, certainly, not one which can feel secure, save by thrusting into Ghetto, or prisons even less commodious, those who reject them. In no age, or country, have any sects or factions of religionists dared to "leave their cause to the arbitration of reason." This damning blot disfigures every religious escutcheon. The blood religionists have spilt in defence of their disgraceful impostures, the ocean may purge away—but never can bury the remembrance of. The history of their crimes is written on the tablets of human memory in ineffaceable characters. Away, then, with the Herald's cant about the persecuting spirit of romanism. The truth has now gone forth, that persecution is an inherent principle of faiths in general, and not the romish faith in particular—and that in all religions, the persecuting principle, though "Sometimes quiescent, at other times denied, is always prepared for action, when the crisis that demanded it has arrived."

The Herald is nevertheless well employed. It is engaged in the good work of knocking away a main prop of christianity. "More power to it." Infidels cannot well do without such invaluable aid as the Herald affords. Their safety is contingent upon the disunion and factious jostlings of rival religious factions. None know better than protestants of the Herald faction, the enormities of which catholic christianity is the parent—and few can so ably expose them. None know better than roman catholics, the inconsistency, futility, and absurdity of protestant faiths—and, certainly, no infidels in the world can more ably expose them. If religionists were united in opinion, they would be united in action—and despotism, such as prevailed in the dark ages, would again prevail. I therefore thank the Herald for denouncing so ably and successfully the romish religion, and the persecuting spirit of its priests. Should any newspaper or magazine writer in popish pay, return the Herald's compliment, by as able and as successful a denunciation of the



protestant religion, and the persecuting spirit of its priests, I will thank him with just the same pleasure, that I thank the Herald. Christians, oh ye infidels, are the very best antagonists of christianity.

### OXFORD THEOLOGY.

THE number of the "Edinburgh Review," for April, 1843, has an article on puseyism. The hypocrites who indite the matter for this periodical in a former article, on the right of private judgment, asserted that all laws in England contrary to toleration were obsolete, or expunged from our statutes. Now this was an impudent lie—with two or three prosecutions for blasphemy, and the recent case of Paterson, in London, staring them in the face. They know well enough that the most liberal on the bench have said that religious subjects must be treated in a serious way, and that they will not allow of ridicule, invective, or ribaldry, on the question of theology. The Edinburgh Reviewers know that this is a law to punish the offences of the poor, and not of the rich, and therefore they preface their article by declaring that they have nothing to do with reason, they will only employ ridicule, which must be the test of puseyism. In the end, they defend the principle, and their language is too good a defence of us not to be given, though we know all their liberals only assert the use of it for their way of thinking. "Should any be disposed to charge us with treating grave subjects over lightly, we have to reply, first, that we sincerely believe that this is just one of those cases in which the maxim of Horace applies:

The ridiculous and the bitter, in a stronger and better manner,  
Cuts to the quick solemn subjects.

Secondly, that we recommend the objectors to a careful perusal of the eleventh of Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales*, in which he shows, 'That we must refute ridiculous errors by railleury.' Thirdly, that amongst the christian privileges of which our opponents would deprive us, we trust that they do not intend to include what Ben Johnson calls our 'christian liberty of laughing' at what is laughable. Fourthly, that if they would have us repress our mirth, it must be by exhibiting a system of doctrines less irresistibly comic. And, lastly, that we are perfectly aware that the artifice of inculcating 'an awful and reverential manner of treating *absurdities*, such as those on which we have animadverted, is the approved receipt, as the history of all superstition shows, of *sanctifying*, in the estimation of the timid and the credulous, the most enormous *deviations from truth and common sense*. Nor is it amongst the least causes of the *disgust* we have felt in perusing the writings of this school, that their authors, even while propounding doctrines which are equally insulting to the bible and to human reason, and defending them by methods which are *disgraceful to morality*, have yet been able to maintain that sanctimonious air, that pious gravity, which distinguish certain writers of the school of Loyola." They are allowed to have a feeling, and express it in the strongest terms against another party in religion, and all are to have the same privilege, against the infidel and atheist, but these last are not to give utterance to their sense of the irrationality of the Jew-book, their horror of the crimes which, from that fountain head, have poured their fetid stream through the history of christianity. "They do these things differently in France," there, from the licence allowed, and from having achieved a triumph in the revolution of the last century, the voltairian school of bitter invective and railleury throw aside their weapons. The clergy, never content with toleration, wish to get civil power again into their hands. The roman catholics want to introduce religious education into the uni-

versities and seminaries—and the protestants wish to have some laws against political associations set aside, that they may form fresh congregations, dependant on the bounty of the state. This has kindled a religious war of words between the contending parties. The religionists, of course, threw the first stone, and accused the university of inculcating every description of immorality. Some archbishop, or bishop, cited passages from the lectures of a professor of morals, in the university of Paris, to prove from them that he recommended murder, adultery, theft, and all crimes against justice and the laws. The university not behind, pointed to the instructions published for the use of priests in confession, similar to the obscenities discussed in Den's theology, and which the French roman catholic clergy entitled a moral compendium. The protestants, eager to attack their rival popery, accused the roman catholics of all the crimes which the latter had imputed to the teaching of the university. But Michelet, a professor, now lecturing in the university, noticing these attacks of the religious upon the learning of the age, said, that "When the clergy had interfered with their liberties, they had been the cause of their upsetting dynasties on the throne, and, whenever such cases occurred, Frenchmen would upset a dozen more." The liberals threaten to let loose all the artillery of infidelity from the arsenals of the last century, and there are no blasphemy prosecution laws in France, to forbid the utmost licence in the expression of religious opinion to all parties. Several dignitaries of the French church are already alarmed, and wish to throw oil on the waters, as they know they must be worsted in free discussion. But the liberals have been too supine in France—religions paid by the state, and the roman catholic acknowledged to be the religion of the majority, and the state religion, goddism in its various forms must flourish, and wish to regain its lost power over the people and the government. Having authority, money, and zeal, it must ever be spreading its influence, and when the time is considered ripe for it, will ever exhibit its political intentions, either to succeed or be again conquered.

France will ever be thus afflicted, as long as they have a national religion, as long as they pay any sects, and the only course of salvation here upon earth, is to leave those individuals who aim at it in heaven to pay for it themselves, as the indulgence of a private luxury. This will be the basis of better political institutions, as the great fault of our neighbours ever has been, as Michelet says, to know the church to be the cause of their political revolutions, and then allow it to remain, as the foundation of renewed abuses. If Napoleon, instead of reconstituting the church of France, had never acknowledged any religion, or any priesthood, and had so disseminated secular knowledge, that he would have made the return to these abominations impossible, he would have shown a state could exist without them, which example, as much as his arms, would have revolutionised all other countries, and preserved France from foreign conquest. How many revolutions would it have rendered unnecessary, how many returns to tyranny would not have been bolstered up by a busy clergy, and a demoniac superstition? But things being as they are, liberation and superstition ever placed in collision, with all the temporal advantages on the side of the latter, the philosophers of France should not treat religion with a tender respect, as they call it, they should cease from their indifference, and not only act upon the defensive but the offensive, lest superstition revived may swallow up the whole person of the "helping hand" of philosophy, which Cousin said was held out to christianity and the people.

Thus in the melée of Roman catholics, protestants, atheists or spinosists, infidels and universalitarians in France, we have a pendant to the skirmish between rational religion, atheism, and Oxford theology in this country.

J. B.



EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER TO A FEMALE  
CHRISTIAN FRIEND.

FREE WILL—ADAM AND EVE.

"MAN," you say, "was created in a state of perfection, and, as a consequence, possessed freedom of will." The history of the fall of Adam, as I view it, proves to me that he had no free will. His will was *compelled* to obey the *strongest* impulse, the same as ours is at the present moment. Man's will is governed in *all cases* by circumstance and organisation. Do you question this? Test it: when you read these words endeavour to force your will to believe that you have not seen them. If you can believe or disbelieve according as you *will* it, you can do this. Again, if your will is free, believe that the christian religion is false and that mohammedanism is the only true religion. You cannot do it: why is this? Because from your infancy you have been surrounded by circumstances which have compelled you to believe that christianity is true and mohammedanism is false. In like manner, a mohammedan could not by any effort of will believe that his faith was false and yours was true, because circumstances have surrounded him from his infancy which have formed his conviction that Mohammed was a true prophet, and that all who disbelieve his doctrines are "dogs and infidels." *No man can believe contrary to his convictions.* If he is *convinced* that a certain doctrine is false, he cannot force himself to believe that it is true, however much he may wish or *will* to do so.

They do not understand man's nature who endeavour by the hope of reward or the fear of punishment to make him believe contrary to his conviction. A hypocrite he may be made, but a *believer* never.

There never was a greater delusion than the belief that man's will is free. Circumstances and organisation govern it in all things. Can either of us love or hate at pleasure? Can we disbelieve the evidence of our senses? Could you, if you desired it, throw off your veneration for your pastor, or your love for your father? Can a well-educated man, with a large development of the organ of benevolence, inwardly approve of what appears to him to be an act of wanton cruelty? And is it possible for a man whose rational education has been neglected, who has been born and reared in vicious circumstances, whose moral and intellectual organisation are depressed and deficient, whilst his animal region is large and unproportionate—is it possible, I ask, that such a man could delight in deeds of benevolence, and find his greatest pleasure in chaste and virtuous action? The closer you examine this subject, the more you will become convinced that circumstances and organisation govern our every thought, and compel our every deed, however much we may think to the contrary. The strongest impulse or motive is always "will's" master, and this impulse or motive is caused by circumstances acting upon our organisation. "But," say you, "it was different when man was in a state of perfection." Can you imagine what you mean when you talk of this state? was man ever in a state of perfection? Perfection is the state of being perfect. God is said to be perfect, because nothing could be added which would make him more excellent, and because of his immutability, his excellence cannot be changed. "For I am the lord, I *change not*." Malachi iii. 6. And again, in James i. 17, we are told that "with him there is no *variableness*, neither shadow of turning." If man had ever been in this state, could he have given way to temptation? Your own good sense must answer in the negative. Adam, according to the story, was in a state of *innocence*, not *perfection*—but are we

not all innocent of crimes before we commit them? And when we are compelled to give way to temptation, are we not, like Adam, giving way to the strongest impulse? What difference is there between human nature *then*, in a state of innocence, and human nature *now*, in a state of innocence? None whatever, or if there is any, the advantages lie with us—for, owing to the knowledge which well-educated and well-positioned human nature of the present day possesses, it is less likely to go astray than it was when ignorant of what was good and what was evil. But if you believe in the attributes assigned to the deity, you will see that it is *impossible* that man could ever have had a free-will. God is said to be omnipotent: now omnipotence means unlimited power. God, therefore, has power over everything. Nothing is free nor could be free. If God gave away this power, and allowed anything to act, feel, and believe as it pleased, in short, gave it a free will, he could not, after so doing, be *omnipotent*. And if he gave away his unlimited power or omnipotence, he could no longer be *immutable*. You see, therefore, that you cannot believe in the attributes assigned to the deity, and the doctrine of free will, at the same time. You *must* give up the one or the other. In fact, you must give up the whole of the story about the fall of man, as related in Genesis, if you believe in the attributes ascribed by christians to the deity.

Do you believe that God is munificent, that "God is love?" 1 John iv. 8. Do you believe that he is omniscient, infinitely wise, knowing without bounds, that "the lord knoweth the hearts of ALL MEN?" Acts i. 24. Do you believe that he is omnipotent, that his power is unlimited, that with him "ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE?" Matt. xix. 25. I have no doubt but you believe in these and the other attributes assigned to him. Well, then, apply these attributes to the story about the fall of man. God, who is omniscient, infinitely wise, who knows all things which have been and ever will be, places a pair of human beings, whom he has just made, in a certain position, and tells them they are not to do a certain thing, whilst, at the same time, he knows that they will do this thing—in fact, he himself creates a something which will compel them by the power of persuasion to do this thing—the same as an engineer makes one wheel to turn round another wheel—and when this thing is done, which he knew would be done, and which he by his creation was the means of bringing about, he curses the pair, and drives them from his presence, and not only does he punish and make them miserable, but their children, that have not yet come into existence, and their posterity for ever are to be depraved in their natures, continually prone to do evil, and perpetually miserable from the moment of their birth to the moment of their death. How can you reconcile this with his attributes of munificence, omniscience, and omnipotence? What would you think of my rationality and love for my children, if I were to place them in a room where there was a book of pictures, with the warning, if they opened that book, that I should destroy them, and, WHEN I HAD THE POWER TO PREVENT IT, I allowed another child of mine, with whom I was not on good terms, to go in and tempt my innocent children to break my commandment, well knowing that these children would not be able to resist the tempter, and that I should be obliged to destroy them in consequence? Would you not think me a brute, a monster, with nothing human, rational, or loveable, in my disposition? I know you would. I know you do not consider I could be guilty of such a detestable action. And yet you believe that God, who is said to be *all love, all wise, and all powerful*, that HE, in the full exercise of these attributes, did this thing! O rationality, whither art thou fled! And yet this is the groundwork of christianity; unless this story is *literally* true, unless Adam *did* commit this offence, there would be no need



for Christ's righteousness—"no fall—no redemption—no offence unto death—no justification unto life."

## NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

In speaking of the doctrine of circumstance, you say, "We do not question the pliability of the mind of youth, or the importance of surrounding it with those influences and circumstances which are likely to tend to the formation and advancement of those right principles which we wish it to possess—but does not this very necessity prove the natural tendency of the human heart to evil—if we see that it needs 'line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little,' to urge it forward in the progress of virtue—can we say that path is the one that by nature it chooses?" To answer this question properly, we must inquire what are right or good principles, and what are wrong or evil principles—because you seem to infer that, if the human disposition is left to itself, or nature, it will show a depraved tendency, and its actions will be evil.

On examining the superstructure of society throughout the world, we find that it is cemented or held together by two kinds of principles—the moral principle, and the religious principle—the first addresses our sense of right and wrong, and says, "Do you unto others as you would have others do unto you." The second addresses our hopes and fears, and tells us to believe in its doctrines, and we shall have joy everlasting—disbelieve in them, and we shall be eternally lost. It is not necessary for our argument, to inquire if society really requires these two principles to keep it together, nor whether one of them could not be advantageously dispensed with—it is enough for us at present to recognise their existence, and that they vary more or less in all climates, and in every country—for instance, it is not moral in our country to have more than one wife, in other countries it is moral to have several, and not only wives, but concubines; and religion in one country is a belief in one God, with certain attributes, in another it is a belief in many Gods, with different and opposite attributes. Morality and religion are so much mixed up together in all countries, that it requires the eye of a philosopher to discern which is the one and which is the other. Religion's promises and denunciations are great aids to morality, where they compel the ignorant and vulgar to study moral precepts and square their conduct thereby, but there are times when religion is morality's greatest enemy: for instance, when she tells her votaries that no service is more acceptable to her than the assassination of the stranger, as among the Thugs—and, nearer home, the burning of martyrs, and the modern heart-burnings and persecutions for conscience sake.

Now, all countries having their geographical moral code, and peculiar religious creed, with which their laws and institutions are interwoven, it is necessary that their youth should be trained to observe this code, and believe in this creed, so that when they grow up to take their fathers' places they will maintain and perpetuate the laws and institutions that are left them.

The religious creed and moral code belonging to a country, are the "right principles" which the philosophers and legislators of that country wish their youth to possess, whether these principles make the youth expert assassins, or benevolent philanthropists; and he, in each country, who practices most the morality, and has the greatest faith in the creed, that was taught him, he is the most virtuous man in his country—at least, so the majority of his countrymen think him: thus the most virtuous man among the Thugs is (or was, for I believe the race is now exterminated) he who was the most persevering and hard-hearted murderer—among the

Hindoos, he who can stand for a lifetime on his head, or who can crawl round an empire, to end his days by throwing himself under the wheels of Juggernaut, or into the waters of the Ganges—among the Turks, he who makes most journeys to Mecca, and hates most heartily the christian infidels—among the catholics, he who attends most to fasts and ceremonies, and who is the most subservient to the dictates of his priest—among episcopalians, he who is the staunchest upholder of church and state—and among dissenters, he who is the most constant attendant, and takes the most active part in the affairs of his sect or congregation, and who is the most diligent in putting in practice the instructions which he weekly receives from his pastor. Here we have *virtue* of every shade and colour, from the murdering Thug to the liberal dissenter, and the former acts, or did act, as much from what he believed were "right principles," as does the latter. Virtue, or right principles, therefore, is *not universal*, but *conventional*; what may be approved of and inculcated as *virtue* or *right principles* on this side of the river or mountain, may be shunned as *vice* on the other side of the river or mountain, and *vice versa*.

Do you not perceive from all this that the religious Thug might as justly have complained of the perversity and natural depravity of the human heart, when the soft-hearted benevolent youths of his nation refused, or shrunk from, assuinating the stranger, as can the religious christian, when he sees those around him who have made use of their reasoning faculties becoming sceptical, or beholds those who profess to believe in his creed, lukewarm and perhaps dissipated?

It is only religionists who entertain the notion of "the natural tendency of the human heart to evil." Moralists know that whatever the human heart or character of the individual may be, it was made to be so by the circumstances which have been continually acting upon his organisation, and that, abstractedly speaking, he is no more responsible for his ideas and the actions resulting from his character—good, bad, or indifferent—than is "the tumbler for the foul or clean water which may be poured into it." Whilst the religionist's notion makes him look coldly and despairingly upon human improvement—whilst it blinds him to using the proper and natural means to reform the human character—and induces him to employ his mind more about things spiritual than temporal, the moralist's knowledge of the influence of circumstance over organisation forces upon him the necessity of studying the *causes* that produce certain *effects*, and the best and most practical means to supersede *bad* circumstances, by the introduction of *good*. Whilst the religionist believes that the curse of a deity hangs over all mere human endeavours, to blight them and bring them to naught, and that this is the cause why man is the same selfish, grovelling creature now that he has ever been, the moralist thinks that the cause of man's wretched condition has ever proceeded from his ignorance of his own nature, and of the nature of things around him. "The earth and all that are on it are curst," mutters the desponding religionist, and he turns from it to console himself with the contemplation of "another and a better world"—"the earth might be a paradise, and human beings angels," cries the sanguine moralist, and he finds a joy unspeakable in indefatigable endeavours to change the circumstances which have made earth a pandemonium, and men devils. Well would it be for the world, if there were fewer religionists and more moralists.

Bath.

M.

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAPTESBURY.

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## BELIEF IN BEING DISTINCT FROM THE UNIVERSE BROUGHT TO THE TEST OF ANALOGY.

### I.

MAN'S proneness to error is proverbial, and of all the errors he has mistaken for truth, incomparably the most ludicrous, as well as pernicious, is the error that there is *Being distinct from the universe*.

This error may be traced to the incompetency of men in general, to distinguish false from true analogies, in other terms, things and their phenomena, *seemingly similar*, from those which *really* are so.

This error is not confined to the vulgar, but is embraced and clung to by men of station and abilities, with a fanatical kind of affection. Since the days of Pythagoras, at least nine-tenths of the human race have thought a *phantasm* designed the universe, because *they* designed huts and palaces.

The philosophers of antiquity were subtle and eloquent—but only a few of them rejected the idea of *Being distinct from the universe*.

Thales, as we learn from *De Natura Deorum* of Cicero, thought a *spirit* made all things of water. Anaxagoras believed that *Gods* were, at different and distant seasons, dying and entering into life. A *spirit* diffused through the nature of all things, from whence our souls are extracted, was the *Being* of Pythagoras. Anaximenes adored *air*, as God. Empedocles thought that the four elements were God. Plato believed in a *Universal Father*—without a name—or not to be named. In his books of laws, men are rebuked for inquiring into his *Being*—elsewhere, in the very same book, he makes the world, the heaven, the stars, the earth, and our souls, *Gods*, admitting moreover, those other *Gods* which had been received by ancient institutions in every republic. Socrates objected to all inquiries into the form of *God*—and yet Xenophon, who reports this, makes him maintain that the *sun* is God—and, moreover, that the *soul* is God—one while he says there is but one *Being*—and afterwards that there are many *Beings*. The *Being* of Speusippus was an animal, a certain power, governing all things—analogous, no doubt, to Robert Owen's animal or power, who "moves the atom, and controls the aggregate." Aristotle said so many contradictory, as well as absurd, things about *God*, that we are warranted in inferring he had no faith in any such *Being*. Xenocrates worshipped eight *Gods*, of whom five were among the planets—the sixth consisted of all the fixed stars, as so many of its members—the seventh and eighth, the sun and moon. Theophrastus believed in a superintendent of the universe, as firmly as I believe in superintendents of police. His opinions upon

that point, did, nevertheless, fluctuate considerably—as sometimes his superintendent was the *understanding*—sometimes the *heavens*—and at other times the *stars*. Heraclides Ponticus, Zeno, Diogenes, Apollonius, Xenophanes, Cleanthes, Aristo, and Democritus, believed in *Being* of some unnatural sort—but their opinions are so confusedly stated as to be quite unintelligible—or when intelligible, so ludicrously fanciful, as to be unworthy of notice. Epicurus himself, who really believed in no other *Being* than nature, yet makes the *Gods* shining, transparent, and perfluous, lodged betwixt the two worlds, as betwixt two groves, secure from shocks, invested with a human figure, and the members that we have, but which are to them of no use. That the stoics agreed with the Epicureans that the only *Being* is nature, may be inferred from the writings of Seneca, who commences one of his chapters on "*Morals*," with these words: "All, says Epicurus, we are to ascribe to nature. And why not to God? *As if they were not one and the same power, working in the whole, and in every part of it.* If you call him the almighty Jupiter, the thunderer, the creator and preserver of us all, it comes to the same issue—some will express him under the notion of fate—which is only a connection of causes, and himself the uppermost and original, upon which all the rest depend." Yet did both stoics and epicureans, in various parts of their works, write most outrageous nonsense about *Being distinct from the universe*.

It was the reperusal, a few days since, of "The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus," that most virtuous of stoic philosophers, which suggested the idea of this article—for when I considered his significant question, "Can we discern a symmetry and order in our own persons, and yet believe the universe is a mere chaos?" I asked myself—

Does experience warrant the conclusion that non-intelligent matter cannot of itself, by the energy natural to it, produce those complicated, beautiful, and surprising structures, which everywhere abound?

Does experience warrant the conclusion that man, *with* design, can produce results at all comparable to those produced by nature *without* design?

Is the analogy between any human work, say a house, and the universe, so clear and complete, that if the former proves the existence of house-builder, or builders, the latter proves the existence of universe-creator, or creators?

While seeking a self-satisfying reply to these self-asked questions, I fell into a reverie, about which I remember very little, except that, towards the close of it, I thought belief in *Being distinct from the universe*, should be brought to the test of analogy.

What corruption is to the insects it engenders, spurious analogy is to religious belief, and I am convinced that no one can rationally answer the three questions of which incidental mention has just been made—whose ideas of relation are false or obscure.



The word relation, when used as it is here used, in an analogic sense, means much more than can be comprehended by common thinkers. Hence, the error so widely accepted as unquestionable truth, about a particular nature having designed universal nature—an error which numbered among its victims the sage Antoninus, who, though wise enough to teach that “everything is *from* nature, subsists *by* nature, and returns to nature,” was unwise enough to speak of that same nature, from whence “everything is,” as “the effect of design.”

Just ideas of relation are the only corrective of that almost universal disposition in sage and simple to arrive at conclusions of deepest import, from analogies purely fanciful.

Analogy is the convenient term we apply to those resemblances we observe between the parts of nature, either in themselves, or in their modes of action—obviously, therefore, to analogise accurately, it is necessary to compare accurately, to note in what things or phenomena differ, as well as resemble, in short, their true relation to each other.

But it is not so much by *defining*, as *illustrating*, analogy, that I hope to convey its full and entire meaning.

Between two oranges plucked from the same tree, and of equal size, the analogy is complete. We should say of two such oranges, they resemble each other very much—meaning thereby that they bore the same, or nearly the same, relation to our organs of sense. Between a peach and an orange of equal size, there would be some analogy, but far less than between orange and orange—for though resembling each other in shape, they widely differ in their relation to our organs of taste and sight. Between a pear and an orange, there is hardly any resemblance, and therefore but little analogy—the relation those two fruits bear to our senses being almost *toto cælo* different.

But though there is some analogy, however small, between every fruit and every other fruit, nay, more, between all things and all phenomena, and all other things and all other phenomena, there cannot be any analogy between entity and nonentity—in plainer terms, something and nothing, because only something can resemble something, or relate to anything. To this truth Xenophanes points in his memorable declarations :

That the universe cannot have emanated from nothing.

The universal state of being has not been derived from any prior principle—nature is one, eternal, and without limit.

In nature there is no origin either of mode or material—there is no real production or annihilation—there is no such thing as passing from nonentity to entity, or the reverse.

Xenophanes drew these conclusions, which may well be likened to “living waters,” from analogy’s eternal fount. They are fatal to belief in being distinct from the universe—for, if the universe cannot have emanated from nothing, it cannot have emanated at all, it being impossible that *the whole* could proceed from anything no part of itself—if the universal state has not been derived from a prior principle—if nature is one eternal, and without limit—if in nature there is no origin either of mode or material, no real production or annihilation—no passing from nonentity to entity, or the reverse, belief in God, or particular Being, distinct from universal Being, *must be false*.

We are told by cowed and surpliced impostors to believe, on pain of hell-fire, that the universe was as certainly made without hands, from nothing, by “something in nothing,” called God, as buildings are certainly constructed with hands, from something in the tangible shape of wood, bricks, mortar, &c., by men. Surely such nonsensical dogmatism originates in the abuse of analogy. There can be no analogies where there is neither relation nor resemblance, as already explained.

What, then, believers in Being, not the universe, or part thereof, must do in order to justify themselves before the tribunal of reason, is to show that nonentity, or nothing, means something, relates to something, resembles something, and is something—in a word, that their divine nonentity is an entity after all, who did not *create* the universe, but *built* it, just as men build palaces. Methinks, believers who attempt this task, will find themselves at the end of their wits, before reaching the end of their work.

This question of analogy is ably treated by John Stewart, the famous pedestrian philosopher, who, in his Essay on Materialism, to reduce the world from contingency to system, reasons thus :

“The knowledge of phenomena, limited by experience, forms the boundary of action, but not of speculation, conducted by rational analogy, as follows—all bodies on the globe are in a constant state of intercircularity with each other—from which phenomenon we analogise the circulation of the matter of the globe, with all the celestial bodies in the visible system—and beyond that, with all existent systems.

“This speculation animates and ennobles human being, by making every atom of matter coequal, coessential, and coeternal, revolving or circulating, throughout all the modifications of matter or power, in an endless vicissitude of mode, and indestructibility of substance. This rational analogy reconciles the eternity of existence to intelligent beings, by the eternity of vicissitude throughout all the modifications of matter and power, and not by the eternity of identity.

“The irregular analogy of fancy, formed by superstition and religious mystery, concludes from particulars to generals—thus, because a man makes a watch, therefore the same genus of intellectual power must make a world, this is subversive of all rational analogy—and the intellectual pleasure and comfort, which its notaries pretend to derive from it, namely, the perpetuating of individual human identity to all eternity, that is, to make quality as indestructible as substance, is equally fallacious and useless.

“Reason analogizes generals with generals—thus, all matter in the mundane system being in a state of circulation, all beyond it may probably unite the mundane matter, in the general circulation of the whole universe—here the conclusion is regular and irrefutable analogy.

“The irregular analogy of fancy makes the particular power of the mode of being called man, a rule of general powers for all other modes, saying, as man builds a house, the same genus of power may build a universe—this forms a wild and inconsistent conclusion, because neither the modes nor the power of matter offer anything general for analogy. Modes, as well as powers of matter, have an infinite diversity, and possess nothing in common but circulation from one to another, influence of action upon each other, and indestructibility of essence—in resemblance of each other, these are all generals, and, as such, are the only basis of rational analogy.

“When I see a tree bearing fruit, I say the tree makes or generates it—and if I am asked, what makes the tree, I say, the earth—because such are the phenomena of matter and power, as communicated to my intelligence. If it should be asked, how a moist clod of earth can make a tree—or this block of wood produce fruit? I answer, I do not know—it is the effect only, and not the cause, which is communicated to my intelligence—and the incomprehensible words, spirit, divinity, immateriality, &c., interposed between the apparent cause and the apparent effect, tend rather to obscure than to explain the simple and sufficient knowledge of the phenomena.

“Intellect seems to possess rectitude of operation, in those animals where it has least design. This is exemplified in the instinct of brutes, which make fewer errors without the aid of design, than the most exalted reason perpetually misguided

by that very design. The hog put into a sack, and taken several miles from his sty, will return home in a direct line, when the best designing geometrician would be lost.

"Man, prone to analogise everything with his own mode of being, supposes nothing can be done without human intellect—this is erroneous analogy, by comparing particulars with generals. True analogy, by comparing generals, that is, the organism of lesser modes with that of greater modes of being, teaches that there must be more power in the body of the earth, than in the body of man, and its qualities as different in genus as the two bodies are different in mode.

"The whole body of nature has two modes of being, called by the ancients and moderns, the good and evil spirits, and in my phenomenal knowledge, system and contingency.

"System is that operation of nature where harmony prevails, that is, where ends are accomplished by a series of determinate means. Contingency is the remaining operations of nature, where power acts out of the harmony of means and ends, and invades the province of its antagonist with disorder and dissolution.

"In illustration, when a man or animal constructs a dwelling, the various materials and labourers co-operate in harmonious means, to produce a specific or systematic end. If a heavy wind, rain, or thunderbolt, should destroy this structure, these elements, not being determinate to that event, it was an act of contingency.

"Again, in a lottery, the putting a number of tickets into a wheel, the turning of the wheel, the taking out a ticket by the hand, these actions being undeterminate towards any specific ticket, the prize falling to A or B, is an act of contingency. But if the drawer marks or sticks a pin in a particular number or lot, and selects it from the rest, this changes the contingency of drawing, into a system of fraud and deception.

"In the same manner, the mundane system will suffer an earthquake, or a partial deluge, without any controul from its superior body, the solar system, whose homogeneous power of gravity has no influence upon the various heterogeneous powers contained in the whole mundane system.

"Finally, the solar system, as a subordinate member of the vast machine of the visible universe, may be deranged by the irregular orbit of the comets, they coming in contact with the planets, and swallowing them up in their vortex; and this catastrophes, cannot be impeded or prevented, because, the various powers of organic matter, whether internal or external, combine a class of similar and of dissimilar qualities, which can have no co-ordination, or harmony with each other. While similar agents preponderate, system is preserved, and when dissimilar, system is dissolved; such are the phenomena of power producing good or evil.

"Of the wonderful effects, or the incognoscible causes, the most astonishing is the superstitious extravagance of the human understanding. Were the fish to leave the water, and mistake the forest for their place of residence, it could not equal the folly of man, in his mistake of the element of intelligence, in abandoning the clear, and all-sufficient, light of phenomena, to plunge into the darkness of incognoscible causation."

This reasoning of Stewart's, will come under review in future papers; at present I shall merely observe, that it is at least equal to all I have seen upon the same topic, and furnishes refutation "all compact" of sophistical whimsies about, and blind belief in, *Being distinct from the universe.*

## MORALITY WITHOUT RELIGION.

BY G. J. H.

IN the latter part of July, 1830, the wreck of an English vessel lay becalmed in an Indian sea. Some days before a tempest had spent its rage on that doomed ship, its masts and sails were gone, and none of the crew remained to tell the tale of destruction save two young men, who lay upon the deck. Wilmot was the name of one, and Martin the name of the other. Wilmot was an atheist, and Martin a christian. They had been reared in the same village, had left home together, and had entered companions upon the same voyage. Wilmot, from the influence of his principles, had closely studied natural causes, and on the day the storm commenced he went, as was his custom, to examine the captain's barometer, and, finding that it had suddenly fallen, he warned his friend Martin of the impending danger. Martin was incredulous because the day was bright, but Wilmot was confident because his suspicions were founded on observation and experience. For while Martin had been bewildered with faith, Wilmot had investigated causes and effects. However, at last Martin was convinced of the storm's approach, and went below to pray for the Lord's protection. In a Sunday school the delusion had been instilled into his early thoughts, and he knew no better. The sky soon darkened over, and the rain came down with pitiless fury—all hands were occupied, and wherever he could, Wilmot laboured to assist. Suddenly he looked round for his friend, but not finding him he rushed below, and on discovering Martin's occupation, he exclaimed, "You have more need of a rope than of prayers. I wish not to hurt your feelings, in this hour, but for your own sake I tell you, that unless you give over supplication and look out for a spar, you will soon be at the bottom!" This had the desired effect. Martin was roused to action, and to Wilmot's timely incitement he owed his life. The two friends succeeded in lashing themselves to the vessel, and became the only survivors of the crew.

Wilmot and Martin were of the same age, about 19. Both were well-formed in person, and interesting in features. Wilmot's dark hair flowed gracefully on his shoulders, and Martin's auburn locks danced playfully round his forehead. Martin's form was more slender, but Wilmot's health was more delicate. Martin's cheeks were blooming, while Wilmot's seemed a little "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The expression of Martin's face was mild, that of Wilmot dignified. In disposition a stronger distinction obtained. In the hour of trial Martin was all irresolution and doubt, while Wilmot exhibited cool confidence and calm self-possession. In that scene of danger pictured by Byron—

When shriek'd the timid and stood still the brave,

Martin would have joined the fearful cry, while Wilmot would have been found with the men of silent, manly endurance. The christian training of Martin had taught him to depend on God—Wilmot's principles had imparted to him the invaluable lesson of depending upon himself.

These two young men had become friends because they were reared companions, social influence had overcome religion's unsocial spirit. Martin was friendly with Wilmot, not because of his christianity but because of his early associations. Yet there were pious moments when he would feel the force of Paul's hateful remark—"what part hath he who believeth with an infidel?" On the other hand, Wilmot's affection knew no variation because of Martin's difference of opinion. He would sometimes speak regretfully of those doctrines of christianity, whose gloom robbed Martin of



cheerfulness — whose effeminacy enervated his reason and destroyed his manly independence—but he never went further than to say, “Martin, I regret that you have had *two* teachers—nature made you my friend—the priest made you pious. The flowers of generous affection which nature nurtured, priestly dogmas have blighted.”

Such were the two friends, described as lying upon the wreck. The danger to which they had been exposed, and the anxiety they had suffered, had sadly emaciated their frames. Three days had they looked in vain for a ship or a shore—they had now over them a burning sun, and around them a dead calm. They were situated not unlike the Ancient Mariner:

All in a hot and copper sky,  
The bloody sun, at noon,  
Right up above the mast did stand  
No bigger than the moon.

Day after day, day after day,  
They stuck nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.

Hope was distant and despair near—anticipation had recoiled on anticipation until they sat like lead upon the heart of Martin, and it was only by an effort of philosophy that his firmer companion maintained his calm bearing. At this time Wilmot stretched himself in a new direction, to see if any sail appeared, and in doing so he unconsciously thrust with his foot a small book, which lay by Martin, into the sea. At the sudden splash it made, as it fell in the water, Wilmot turned round, and Martin, in a rage, jumped up. Wilmot, wondering at his friend's altered mien, said, quietly, “what is the matter?”

MARTIN.—(Very angrily).—“You know what's the matter. You've pushed my bible—my only consolation—into the sea.”

WILMOT.—“I am sorry for that. Not because I value the book, but because you did. Honestly, my opinion is that you have more need of reason than a bible. Philosophy is never angry at accidents. That book can have yielded you little wisdom, that has left you enraged at its loss.”

Martin fell to musing at this remark, and Wilmot, with the little strength left him, struggled to drag a piece of sail, which the sun had dried, to protect himself and Martin from continual exposure to the air. He carefully spread it over Martin, who watched one way, and drew it over himself as he lay down to watch in the opposite direction.

They had not long been covered before Martin grew so impatient, at the partial confinement under the sail, that he threw it off him, and before Wilmot had time to seize it, it rolled over the side into the sea.

Wilmot for a moment was lost in surprise, but recovering, he calmly said, “I am sorry for what you have done. A short time ago you were incensed because I, by accident, pushed your bible overboard; I am not incensed, but I am sorry, that you, by impatience, have sent my sail the same way.”

MARTIN replied.—“I think it of little consequence, as the heat is insufferable. I trust that the Lord, in his mercy, will bring us safe to land.”

WILMOT.—“If he does, I apprehend that he will bring us there with a fever. You live for another world—less ambitious than yourself, I am content to live well in this. Exposed as we now are, we are liable to great danger. It is related by a Scotch writer, that a young merchant once sailed from New York to St. Domingo. He was sick on the voyage, and as the weather was hot he thought confinement below deck intolerable, although necessary for him, and per-

sisted, contrary to advice, in lying at full length on deck, in the open air. He could perceive no connection between exposure to the mild, grateful sea breeze of a warm climate and a fever. He did not know that the sea air, in warm climates, holds a prodigious quantity of water in solution, and that damp and heat operating together on the human organs, soon derange their healthy action. The consequence of this young man's conduct was, that he was soon taken ill, and he died the day after his arrival at St. Domingo. I earnestly hope that no harm will result to you, but, like the merchant, you have preferred present ease to the avoidance of future pain.”

MARTIN answered mournfully.—“Well, I do wish that I had attended to these subjects. I see that I have exposed you as well as myself to danger. But how is it that you are not angry, as I was just now?”

WILMOT.—“Induced by my principles to study myself, and my relation to the external world, in order to pursue the most useful conduct, it has appeared to me that in any unfortunate occurrence, it is the truest wisdom to repair the mischief—if repairable—and if not, to do the best we can to prevent similar events recurring. This is why I have preferred explaining to you the error you have committed, instead of being angry with you.”

As Wilmot concluded, his voice, from weakness, grew nearly inaudible, and from the same cause it is questionable if Martin was able to attend to his words. Weary with watching, oppressed by heat, exhausted by famine, and debilitated by exposure, they both fell into a state of unconsciousness, from which they would never have awakened had not human help been near.

When they became sensible, they found themselves lying in a plain, spacious wigwam, attended by an elderly European man. Some time after they had swooned on the wreck, a slight breeze sprung up which wafted the ship in sight of a neighbouring shore. The wreck being observed by Balz, their attendant, who was rowing along the beach, it led to their rescue and lodgment in his house.

Balz was a man who had seen much of the world. He entered it full of ardour and hope, but its dark distrust had pained, and its cold selfishness had chilled, him. He found that for all his exertions few would thank, and many would reproach, and he had drawn himself from society in disgust — which withdrawal was wrong. Balz did not clearly perceive that the generous man will do good, not only to those who thank, but also to those who would injure, him. It is not so much in receiving the gratitude, as in witnessing the improvement of our fellow-men, that we should seek the reward of any exertions for their benefit. It is of prime importance that the wretched are made happier, but it is of little consequence whom they thank for it. Balz, however, had retained all his kindly impulses. Fond of nature, he had sought the orange groves, the glorious palms, and wildernesses of myrtle, of which a poet hath said one may approach them without cringing or humility, and address them without falsifying freedom's emotions within us. Though living in an Indian clime, Balz had, by temperance, preserved his health—and if one may couple together dissimilar things, he had, by his generous conduct, won the confidence and esteem of the natives near whom he dwelt. As he always advised those in difficulties, and succoured them to the extent of his means in distress, he rejoiced at the opportunity of befriending two of his own countrymen, and with a father's care he attended Wilmot and Martin.

The conjecture of Wilmot was true. A fever seized himself and Martin, and they lay for several days with gradually decreasing chances of life.

In a large valley, a few miles from the spot Balz had

chosen for his retreat, lay an Indian village, and at this time two wesleyan missionaries were at the place—they having descended like a scourge upon the unsophisticated inhabitants. Being told of Balz's residence, they came up to pay him a visit of inquiry, when they found Martin and Wilmot in the state described.

Like good christians they thrust their way, unasked, into the apartment of the two friends, in order to ascertain the state of their souls.

It must here be admitted, that though Balz was exemplarily moral, and most humanely disposed, he was not a religious man. Therefore he understood not how any faith justified departure from common courtesy, and upon observing this step of the missionaries, he immediately requested that they would return into his room. As they seemed surprised at the requirement, though politely given, Balz observed—"Gentlemen, I cannot allow you to obtrude yourselves on persons under my protection."

"Oh," said one of them, "we went to inquire concerning their souls."

"I must say, gentlemen," rejoined Balz, "that your anxiety for souls does not justify your rudeness. I have often witnessed similar effrontery in my own country, and I must be so plain, gentlemen, as to tell you, that it must not be practised in my house."

Upon this, the missionaries said they were sorry if they had been guilty of indiscretion, and hoped that he would allow their zeal to be their excuse.

"Willingly," said Balz, "on the condition that you allow your zeal to carry you no farther in the same way. I will now inquire if the young men wish to see you, and if so, you are quite welcome to visit them."

Wilmot, on being told who the visitors were, declined their services. Martin, however, expressed joy at the circumstance, and the missionaries were ushered to his pallet side.

They talked to poor Martin of his never-dying soul—of the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched, and urged his immediately calling on God for salvation. To these comfortable injunctions they added that the fever he suffered was nothing to eternal fire, and that perhaps a few hours would decide if he was to lie in the arms of Jesus or the lake of hell. Poor Martin—as well he might, believing it all—groaned with agony.

Miserable imbeciles, to fill the burning brain of a fellow-creature in a high fever with the horrible fictions of a bigot's hell. To believe that a frenzied assent to a few wild and revolting propositions about salvation could change the purposes of deity—if deity there be.

They went on wearying Martin with questions, which he struggled to answer, and every agonised throes which they occasioned, was regarded as the signs of a fresh seal to their mission.

Here Wilmot, fearing for his friend's life, beckoned to him, and summoning all his strength to speak audibly, said, "My dear Martin, *hear* what you please from these gentlemen, but do not endanger your life by your endeavours to speak."

Upon this the missionaries turned round to Wilmot, with the air of angry, disappointed men, and one of them said, in the usual tone of religious *modesty*, "Young man, I am afraid that you are in a very horrible condition. Remember, you too have an immortal soul, which must shortly answer at the bar of God, for deeds done in the body. We should be very glad to know why it is that you have declined to hear our advice about your eternal welfare? We suspect you have been tainted with the poison of infidelity." Then caring nothing for the inability of Wilmot to defend himself from

their coarse insinuations, they commenced a cowardly and false tirade about the death-beds of Voltaire and Paine. To a man less firm or less self-possessed than Wilmot, this exciting speech would have stimulated to reply, but knowing the danger of excitement in his condition, he lay as though he heard them not, when seeing Balz enter the room, who had been attracted by the vehement and strange talking of the missionary, Wilmot beckoned to him. When he approached Wilmot said, "My kind friend, as a last favour, beg these gentlemen to withdraw. They *may* mean me well, but they are doing me harm. Say should I recover I will see them."

Balz immediately said, with a firmness they could not mistake—"Gentlemen you *must* withdraw. If that young man," pointing to Martin, "wishes your prayers, well and good—I will retire to yonder corner while you are engaged, but when you have concluded you must at once retire."

There was no chance of their mistaking their position, so they prayed with Martin and withdrew.

Wilmot soon after fell asleep, but poor Martin found himself in a fearful state of excitement, alternately filled with terror and oppressed with despair. He became delirious—muttered about his bible—declared in frantic tones that the Devil was come for him—and other painful expressions, indicative of religious madness, and feverish frenzy. Balz laboured to still him and compose his thoughts, but it was all in vain, the excitement of the missionaries had sealed his fate. To borrow from James Montgomery—

As the last throes of death convulsed his cheek,  
He gnashed, and scowled, and raised a hideous shriek,  
Rounded his eyes into a ghastly glare,  
Lock'd his white lips—and all was mute despair.

Wilmot could not be ignorant of this event, but where he could be of no assistance, he offered no interruption, which might only have distracted the attention of Balz. It was a great trial for Wilmot to witness the unhappy death of his friend.

The next day the missionaries called again, but were not suffered to see Wilmot. They were told the particulars of Martin's end, but instead of manifesting compunction for the part they had taken in effecting his death, pretended joy that providence had directed them so opportunely to call upon him. On that day the fever reached its crisis, and Wilmot changed for the better, and doubtless Martin would also have recovered had he remained undisturbed.

Wilmot's concern at the death of his friend much retarded his convalescence, and several weeks elapsed before he was able to walk out. On the first day that he did so, he leaned on the arm of Balz, and went to visit the grave of poor Martin, whom Balz had interred in a romantic spot. While lingering near the grave, the two missionaries approached on their way to a settlement a few miles off. Without salutation or apology they commenced observations.

1ST MISSIONARY.—"You have reason, sir," said he, addressing Wilmot, "to be thankful to providence for your recovery."

WILMOT.—"If I may speak in the language of reason, I may be more thankful to my friend Mr. Balz, who relieved me in my weak condition from your incivilities and strange remarks. Had I been excited as my friend was, I should now be where my friend is, in that grave under your feet."

Insensible to shame for anything perpetrated to advance the glory of God, the missionaries exhibited no signs of sympathy for the unfortunate bereavement they had occasioned.

2ND MISSIONARY.—"We came as missionaries from the father of lights, to point you both the way to heaven."



WILMOT. (Suppressing a smile of pity for that father of lights who could not see better, than to select such messengers to perform his errands), replied—"Ye pointed my friend the way to the grave, you mean. Yours was a melancholy mission to him."

1ST M.—"Young man, I hope that the grace of God will yet visit you. You scoff at the idea of hell, but your friend, whom I fear did not seek the Lord in time, bare awful testimony, in his last moments, to its truth. He exclaimed that the Devil was waiting to receive him, and you will find the truth when it is too late."

WILMOT.—"Instead of saying that I 'scoff at the idea of hell,' you would do me more justice to say that I do not believe in that horrible fiction. And I shall continue to do so, unless you can rest its truth on better evidence than the incoherencies of a dying man. You first drove Martin to madness by your awful conceits, and now you contend that his frenzy proves their truth. The testimony of delirium is not sufficient evidence of the existence of Devils. Once, in early youth, my deceased friend exclaimed, in the wildness of fever, that his mother, who had watched beside him for weeks, with a mother's tenderness, was murdering him. But this did not prove that his mother was a murderess, nor does the exclamation you quote prove the existence of the Devil."

2ND M.—(With the air of a man who had made a sudden discovery).—"Young man, I believe you are an atheist. Let me entreat you to pray to the Lord to turn you from the error of your way."

W.—"I suppose that you mean that he will make me think as you do?"

2ND M.—(A little puzzled by the question, hesitatingly answered).—"Yes."

W.—"Now, come, you are doubtless fair men—I will make a bargain with you. You pray earnestly that the Lord will convert you to atheism, and then I will pray that he converts me to christianity."

1ST M.—"Your request is preposterous. Do you think we can desire to embrace atheism?"

W.—"Is not your request also preposterous? Do you think I can wish to embrace christianity, which I consider a hurtful delusion? Had my friend been taught useful knowledge instead of piety, he would have escaped the fever which placed him at your mercy."

1ST and 2ND M., together.—"Oh, young man, we tremble for you."

W.—"Sirs, I am also concerned for yourselves, and for these simple people among whom you are come to minister. They are already the victims of one religious delusion, Buddhism, and you are come not to set them free, but to impart to them another. Instead of bringing to them salvation, as you boast, you chain them to another superstition. You would really be a blessing did you come to civilise, instead of religionise, them. Would you teach them useful arts in the place of methodism, their posterity would rise up to bless your memory. In such a work you might command me. But as it is, I must endeavour to counteract the pernicious influence of your misdirected zeal. The memory of my friend warns me to it, and his grave on which you now tread shall become a lasting memorial against your doctrines."

Upon this they parted. Wilmot with Balz, to whom he had become much attached, and whose enthusiasm was again reviving. As they walked home they entered into plans to accelerate the enlightenment of the Indian natives, and the missionaries concocted a despatch to be read at the next missionary meeting in London, detailing the alarming spread of atheism in their locality.

## MONEY THE "MOTIVE" IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

(Continued from No. 23.)

THE same process was begun in Wales; we gradually encroached upon our neighbour's territory, till we finally emmeshed the whole principality, and for defending his right, and our doing wrong, King Edward I. inflicted on the last king of Wales the death of a felon. Scotland was very near undergoing a similar fate at the hands of the same prince; her heroes, like Alfred, were driven by distress to become robbers, and then hanged under that title. As long as the territories of France, under the Norman line of England, paid the expenses of their defence, we kept up the connection, but we quickly gave them up, when we found they dipped into our pecuniary resources, without yielding a return. Our kings then felt, what has been the motive to all our revolutions, an ontery against their extravagance, when it was notoriously the fact, that Henry III., under whom this sentiment first prevailed, was one of the most economical of our kings, and under no reign was England richer and more flourishing. Nevertheless, while the king complained that he had scarcely sufficient to supply the necessities of life, when the citizens of London were living in luxury, the barons and people urged his extravagance as a reason for an appeal to arms, and a revolution in the government, which produced the germs of all our present liberties.

It was only by ensnaring the influential part of the community by the prospect of gain, properties, and offices in Wales and Scotland, that Edward obtained sufficient revenue for the maintenance of the crown and to carry on his wars, but even under this powerful and successful prince, there was a perpetual struggle between him and his people, on pecuniary points.

A weak monarch who could not offer a quid pro quo was sure to fall a victim—the peaceful son of the tyrannical Edward was accused of exaction, on that account deposed from the throne, and murdered in a prison.

The Jews, under the reign of the father, turned over from the extortion of the king to the people, were finally banished the kingdom. Since which time, the number of Jews have been comparatively small in this kingdom, and though in most nations their expulsion has been represented as a loss to industry, yet the people of this country have so well supplied the Jewish disposition, that we do not seem to have suffered by their absence. Yet their removal seems immediately to have laid open the church to spoliation. The church took the part of the people in order to defend their possessions, and their united forces gained many of our common liberties, until the people themselves pointed to the resources of the church, which having long performed the part of the Jews, in being a ready treasury for the kings of England, finally fell a victim to the cupidity of king and people in the reformation under Henry the eighth. The pope plagued the church and the lay proprietary of sees in England under Henry III. The latter party, probably not without the tacit approval of the clergy, applied a strong but efficacious remedy to this state of things. A person who had been aggrieved by the pope nominating to one of his livings, formed a party of sufferers from the same causes, who assassinated and despoiled all the presentees of the papal court, until the pope was actually compelled to receive a visit from this Captain Rock in the eternal city, and come to terms with this private defender of public rights. The Jews removed, a body of their most violent persecutors fell, the templars. Edward II. held their property as his own right

when their order was dissolved—after eleven years it was said to have been restored to the knights hospitallers, but besides the revenues, we may judge that some of the principal went in such custody. Such was the civil state of England when Edward III. came to the throne, that he was obliged to march with armies against robbers, “a disease (says Hume) hitherto inherent in the constitution.” Purveyance, which was so much declaimed against by the nobles who could make themselves heard, was the royal prerogative of robbery allowed to the kings. It was also claimed and exercised by all the royal family, and made the means of pillage by the royal officers. The barons were, like petty kings in their possessions, therefore, from the head downwards to the heel, the whole constitution existed on an unrestricted right of exercise of robbery. After a long course of spoliation Edward the first had completed the sacrifice of the Jews, as victims to the necessities of the state. In the shorter reign of Edward his son, the fall of the templars and the temporary confiscation of their property luckily occurred to, and probably supplied the place of, the Jews. The grandson, in the words of Hume, “Robbed at once all the Lombards, who now exercised the invidious trade formerly monopolised by the Jews, of lending on interest.” In the early part of his reign, he was driven to every shift to raise money, and when forced to have recourse to parliament for supplies, they were sure to purchase the diminution of his prerogative, and the increase of their own privileges, by the sum of money which they granted to his necessities. Nevertheless, whatever money he could obtain, by whatever means, he spent as fast as he could procure it, and afforded the spectacle to the continent, of a king obliged to conceal himself from his creditors, and run away from them in Flanders. The Lombards had felt the first shock, and the effects of his extravagance were destined to spread further amongst their countrymen. It is related in Sismondi’s Italian Republics that, in consequence of non-payment of loans lent to Edward, the principal houses in Florence, amongst which were the Medicis, failed. In the middle of his reign, he was more successful in his enterprises against France, and the English, who at first feared the connection of England with France, lest they should verge into the lesser possession, when they found Edward gave up the kingdom he claimed to pillage, forgot their dislike to taxes, seconded his efforts with supplies, and, allured by plunder, “attached themselves (says Hume) to a prince who led them to the acquisition of riches.”

Never, perhaps, in the annals of the world, was a warfare carried on more in the manner of banditti, and such was the universal misery they occasioned, that the French peasantry, stimulated by want and despair, were driven to revolt, and increased plunder, massacre, and the most horrible excesses on their superiors. The English were not able to gain any cities of note, and, left themselves open to an invasion, were finally obliged to surrender all the territory they had temporarily acquired. Besides the revolt of the peasants, the English left behind them their soldiery, to carry on the system of pillage which they had taught them—and Edward the Black Prince, for the promise of a sum of money, lent himself and his forces to support on the throne Peter of Castille, one of the greatest tyrants of the times. Edward the third, his son (the black prince), and the English of this reign, in their wars with France, only respected the lives of those who were of the same rank as the king, or could pay a heavy ransom for their release, the rest were put to death like cattle at the shambles, and brutes in the sports of the field. While the English, for lucre, sold themselves to every injustice and cruelty abroad, they were parting with their liberties at home. Hume says, of Edward III., when his splendid success against France had added weight to his

authority, he made the arbitrary imposition of taxes almost annual and perpetual, and openly avowed and maintained the power of levying taxes at pleasure, in spite of the statute of Edward the first, to the contrary.

But no sooner did this career of triumph and confiscation cease, and nearly all was lost in the end, which had been gained in the middle of the king’s life, than the people’s privileges made greater progress than they ever did till after the end of the Tudors.

Now the ground was cleared of Jews, templars, Lombards, the church of Rome began to be considered, as the former had been, the cause of the poverty in England, and was pointed out for a like fate. What roused the Germans to the reformation a century afterwards—the abstraction of their money—gave us precedence of reformers by a century, and perhaps still earlier. The people in this reign only wanted to do what they had proposed, and carried partly into execution under Henry III., the expulsion of the church of Rome, which they would have effected had Edward the 3rd consented. But the preachers, particularly Wickliffe, urged the people to fulfil the entire extent of the reformation, and confiscate all church property. It was a fundamental part of his new doctrine that the church should not be in the possession of temporalities. This proposition they say was occasioned by Wickliffe being dispossessed himself of an office of emolument in the university of Oxford. However, he does not seem to have set the example to his discourse and to others, by resigning other preferment which he held, and so strong was the national love of lucre, or the fear of punishment, that, like other theologians, whenever called into question, he explained away his opinions and made submission. While the propagation of his doctrines raised a religious revolt in Bohemia, the direction of the apostle, his disciples’ sentiments seemed to take a more material turn. They not only raised an outcry against the clergy but against the lay right of property, and embarking in a crusade against the rich, were defeated under the beginning of the next reign. In the pecuniary inclination of our views, we afforded another contest with the continent, for while “The commotions of the people in Flanders, the mutiny of the peasants in France, were the natural effects of the growing spirit of independence,” the insurrection of the people in England was owing first to the overweight of taxation—which provoked the rising of Wat Tyler. But the other cause showed the cupidity of the higher classes, the extent of personal slavery being greater in England, says Froissart, than in any other country. When the king had disarmed the populace by promising them manumission, and saved the lives and properties of the nobles, they declared they preferred death to giving up their privileges, by granting liberty to their slaves.

The people were, as usual, unsuccessful with the issue of their enterprise, and the English have been more so than any other people, probably owing to the desire of instant realisation which is held out to them in the object of their wishes, at the sacrifice of their principles, their leaders, or their own future security. The populace of England are now, and therefore probably have been, given to enjoy the advantage of to-day, to the neglect of all other precautions and objects. The followers of Wat Tyler are accused of having pillaged the warehouses of the rich merchants, and we know their order gave up some party to plunder in all preceding insurrections, which probably in this, frustrated the further projects of the more enlightened conspirators. This king became unpopular, as he did not lead them to the plunder of the French, and though he was not accused of having imposed one arbitrary tax without consent of parliament, during his whole reign, says Hume, yet they deposed him on the plea



of heavy taxation. The worst feature of this reign was the murder, by the king's orders, of Gloucester, who was excessively rich, and whose property, at his death, by confiscation, fell to the king.

The clergy procured an act against heretics, who are said, by monkish writers, to have been half the population. This reformation, however, seems to have died away till the desire of lucre, in king and people, under Henry the eighth, brought it again into full operation. The upper classes engaged in confederacies to do wrong, so that no subject could trust to the protection of the law against the interest of his superior. Benevolences were also first levied by this king, which became the exercise of royal malevolence, and finally provoked the expression of malevolence in the people.

(To be continued.)

## PROPHECIES AND TYPES.

(From the Boston Investigator.)

PROPHECIES and miracles have been the chief pillars of the christian church; the two corner stones of superstition and folly; and whatever an amiable reformer attempted, by making them the motives of virtue, experience tells us they have been converted into tools of the most boundless ambition. It is the pretended divinity of the christian religion which has done all the mischief. People have looked on this system as the work of a Divine Creator, whose goodness they supposed was boundless, whose wisdom was most perfect; and, under this belief, they have been cruelly imposed upon. With respect to those parts of the old testament which are said to tell of the coming of Christ, they are perhaps the most obscure parts in it; and the metaphoric and unintelligible language in which they are expressed, is one great reason why an impartial reader cannot believe in them. Happily for mankind, they have nothing to do with morality; the language it speaks is plain and easy, and cannot be misconstrued nor misunderstood.

If the prophets of the Hebrews had been able to foretell future events, and wished themselves understood, why did they not express themselves in an intelligible language? A prophecy should be a clear, exact, and certain prediction of something that will come to pass. What would have been more easy for them, than to have written down these few lines? "Israel has no king, but a teacher to expect. This teacher will be the son of a carpenter, born at Bethlehem, under Herod. He will prove his mission by the power of miracles, and will be sacrificed for the truth of his religion, under Tiberius." This would have been miraculous enough; but would have had more the form of a prophecy than all their farrago of figurative nonsense put together. There is nothing to be found in the old prophecies which has the least relation to Christ; they neither speak of his person, his sufferings, nor his office in this world, so as to convey the idea that Jesus is the person alluded to. Nor is it by picking up, here and there, a few lines of equivocal sense, which theologians have done, and calling them prophecies, that can convince a reasonable person that they are so.

To show how far the spirit and rage of everything in the bible, and of applying it to Christ or the church, has been carried, it will be necessary to take a view of that book called Solomon's Songs. It is very well known, that this wise and amorous king, forsaking the excellent lessons which his father David gave him before his death (1 Kings chap. ii.), kept a scraggio: "He had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, and his songs were a thousand and five" (1 Kings, chap. xi., verse 3—chap. iv., verse 32).

These songs—at least, those which go under his name—ap-

pear to be a collection of amorous verses, written between him and some of his mistresses. How the priests could take it into their heads to find any comparison between Solomon and his mistresses, and Christ and his church, is difficult to say. We are informed in the songs, and it shows the dissoluteness of Solomon's manners, that "King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom of gold, the covering of purple; the midst thereof being paved with lone, for the daughters of Jerusalem" (Solomon's Songs, chap. iii., verse 10); and most probably, to some of those daughters of Jerusalem these sonnets were addressed. It is unnecessary to quote any of the ridiculous and wanton passages with which this book abounds; but whoever made the comparisons there laid down, seem not to be aware of the consequence. There is certainly not the least resemblance between the chastity of Christ and the adulterous and fornicating wantonness of Solomon. As to the church's being like one of the prostituted daughters of Jerusalem, that is best known to those who have prostituted her. Since the prophecies are so very equivocal in the old testament, and as some lines in that collection may be made to apply to almost anything, it may be necessary to call attention to the new testament, and see whether any of the prophecies contained in it be more clearly expressed.

(To be continued.)

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TWOPENCE.

## A LETTER ON THE GOD QUESTION,

*Addressed to the Members of John-street Branch of the Rational Society.*

The name of God hath fenced about all crime with holiness.—*Shelley.*

FRIENDS.—I learned this day (Wednesday, 15th Sep.) with some surprise and extreme satisfaction, that you had resolved to allow the terrible God question to be publicly discussed within the walls of your institution.

Upon receipt of so agreeable a piece of information, I felt as the apostles probably did when people suspected they were "filled with new wine," and straightway it occurred to me that though I could not be present at your glorious discussion (announced, as my London correspondent tells me, for Friday night next), I might do the cause of truth considerable service by printing in these columns a letter to my "companions in arms" of John-street institution, containing a brief multum in parvo statement of the "strong reasons" which I think justify disbelief in God; in other and less obscure terms, warrant us in rejecting as fanciful or fabulous all tales told about immaterial existence, whether such imaginary existence be called power, great spirit, great first cause, universal ruler, supreme judge, or any other high-sounding names.

I am well aware that to destroy belief in the phantasmal being those names are vulgarly applied to, is to lay the axe at religion's root, and, therefore, to destroy that belief, or aid in its destruction, is viewed by me in the light of a sacred duty. Belief in phantasmal being, in the reality of unreal mockeries, will not bear the test of discussion, and allow me to say that by bringing it to that test, you have sealed its doom; you have given the first effectual stab ever yet given by an associated body to a belief fatal alike to truth and virtue.

"It is idle to cure men of a single folly, unless you cure them of being foolish," and in agitating the God question, in sometimes recommending, sometimes forcing, and always encouraging its discussion, I know myself to be acting a permanently useful part, for though moralists of the *don't-disturb-deeply-seated-prejudices* school may cure men of single follies, they cannot cure them of being foolish, until belief in the reality of phantasmal monsters is destroyed.

The short is, men must be taught sound and settled opinions upon the question of religion, before we can sanely expect them to think rationally upon other topics. Robert Owen is, or rather was, of precisely that opinion. In lecture 4 of a "Course on an entire new State of Society," printed more than ten years ago, he used these remarkable words:

Has not religion cost the world an incalculable amount of blood and treasure, and created hitherto unceasing discord between the inhabitants of various districts of the earth? Has not religion been the most powerful engine ever yet de-

vised to check the progress of knowledge, of wealth, of charity, and of kind and good feelings among the human race? Has not religion, wherever it has been introduced, formed man into the most inconsistent and irrational of all terrestrial beings? Is not religion at this hour the real and sole cause of the great mass of the people in all countries existing in the lowest state of ignorance and of poverty, of crime and of misery, while the most ample means every where abound to create a new state of existence for them, in which knowledge and wealth, virtue and happiness, may be made to superabound and be alone known? Has not religion required one half of the human faculties for its service, and rendered the other half inefficient for any good, wise, or rational or wise purpose? Does not religion, *now*, divide man from man throughout all the families of the world? And tell me if you can, where the individual is to be found, who, by religion has not been made a mental slave and a coward, or a furious bigot? Will it not, then, be a high service performed for the human race, to open to them the means of attaining a superior state of society, in which there shall be no necessity for any religion? in which all such necessity shall cease by the introduction of truth; of truth plain, simple, straightforward, and easily to be understood; of truth, which by its universality and immutability, will expose the fallacies on which all the religions of the world have been established; of truth, which requires no artificial, foreign, or divine aid, in opposition to sense and reason, but which will support itself against all error, by its never-failing consistency under every trial to which it can be put. *Truth*, therefore, in the new and superior state of society, will supersede religion.

I hope so, and may I be there to see truth supersede religion, but I have no faith in the formation of so new and so superior a state of society, by believers in the incomprehensible—your half-reformed superstonists, who, like Janus, sport a double face, one turned towards the region of reality, the other turned towards the black wilderness of "chimeras dire." The individuals here pointed at are a kind of mongrel religionists, and almost as deep in the mud of "rational religion" as christians are in the mire of christianity. They would supersede religion without doubt, not, however, by truth, but by another religion, as false in principle, contemptibly ludicrous in nature, and withering in influence, as the enormous humbug it is brought to supersede. No, no, it is not a displacement of old religions by new ones that society needs, but its displacement by the great truth that nature is the only reality, and all the "Gods of all the nations are idols." This is the truth which will supersede religion, and the truth I will now endeavour to make manifest.

Were I to take part in the forthcoming discussion, I should insist upon the affirmers of a God giving some account of him, a distinct account, if they could, but some account "anyhow." Positive assertors ought to be armed with positive proofs, and the logic of good sense as well as of the schools, demands that he who affirms the existence of God, Devil, witch, or ghost, or other "strange characters," should support his assertion either by producing the entities those names represent, or, failing in evidence so irresistible, at least be prepared with some kind of evidence likely to satisfy persons of reflection, who are not in the habit of believing



true, off-hand, unsupported assertions with regard to *any* questions, and least of all with regard to questions of religion, in support of which it is notorious the bulk of mankind are quite ready to invent facts and imagine truths. Every one knows that the *suppressio veri*, and *suggestio falsi* practice, is far more common among religion defenders than any other class of persons.

Lloyd Jones is an affirmer of God's existence—he has undertaken, it seems, to prove there is “a great ruler, or ruling power of the universe,” and if he succeed, you ought to feel exceedingly obliged to him, but I recommend you to see of what sort of stuff his God, alias great ruler, is made, by demanding an explanation of its nature. John Stewart, the renowned walking philosopher, in his capital book, the “*Opus Maximus*, an Essay on Materialism,” tells us, with perfect truth, that the *nature* of anything signifies the appearances under which that thing exists, as its attributes of figure, action, colour, size, locality, &c. Now if Lloyd Jones is familiar with a “great ruler” he can as easily describe its nature, as he can any other merely natural ruler with whom he is acquainted. Demand, then, such of you as take part in the discussion, an account, an explicit, perfectly comprehensible account, of the “great ruler’s” *nature*. Mark, reader, the appearances under which that thing exists, as its attributes of figure, action, colour, size, locality, &c. When Lloyd Jones, or any other God assessor, has satisfied you upon this point, proceed to others, but not till then.

The distinguished writer just quoted, says “Phantasm imports an action or motion of mind, without form, substance, entity, or original, and is designated by the world apparition, witch, spirit, magician,” &c., adding that “The immaterial essences, abstract ideas, power without substance, and all such contradictions are involved in the class of phantasms.” If then you find the “incomprehensible power” worshippers can no otherwise explain their “great ruler” than by calling him an abstract idea, an immaterial essence, a governing principle, a power without substance, or omnipresent spirit—laugh at them, if you will, most heartily, but do not suffer them to palm upon you such ridiculous phantasms as veritable existences.

Believers in God, who would escape the charge of placing their trust in phantasms must show their incomprehensible power, or whatever else they choose to call him, is something rather more tangible than immaterial essences, abstract ideas, &c., for Stewart properly places all such nonentities in the class of phantasms. But they cannot do this, and they know it, though too silly or too disingenuous to say so.

It is monstrous that individuals arrogating to themselves the title and character of rationalists, should have the senseless impertinence to advertise the existence of something, about which they know absolutely nothing. Either what they call sometimes God, sometimes Incomprehensible Power, sometimes Great First Cause, and sometimes something else, is cognoscible by human sense or he is not—if he is, why are we kept without a particle of information respecting him—if, however, he is not, why, in the name of sense, babble about him at all?

As Lloyd Jones volunteered, a year or two ago, to defend every word Robert Owen had written, I suppose “the incomprehensible power” *not* moves the atom and controls the aggregate of nature, is the god of his idolatry—and I am bound to say, that of all the Gods to which folly or knavery, or both, have furnished “a local habitation and a name,” Pope’s “least understood” Great First Cause *not* excepted, this Incomprehensible Power is least comprehensible, and most ridiculous. It is a “deified error” of the vilest kind—an error whose grossness can only be matched by its perniciousness. It is marvellous that an error so palpable should

so long have stood its ground—and still more marvellous that rationalists of the 19th century should be found among its defenders. To expose it is a task at once easy, pleasant, and useful.

John Stewart, in the Essay on Materialism, before referred to, says, that “The criterion of the modification of thought, called phantasm, is to bring all sounds to the test of sense, that is, to seek after the real object which the word represents.” This premised, it incontestably follows that words which neither represent real objects nor real actions, are sounds without sense. Now, the word power is of this class, except when used as the word *strength* is, namely, to denote a *quality* of substance, but, as used by Robert Owen, and “genuine disciples of the system,” it means something neither substance, nor mode, nor quality, nor anything but phantasm, and is, therefore, rightly christened “incomprehensible.”

David Hume, in his Essay on the Idea of Power, says “It must be allowed that when we know a power, we know that very circumstance in the cause by which it is enabled to produce the effect.” Now, admitting, for argument sake, the universe is an effect, as Robert Owen, and “genuine disciples” of the system assure us it is, I should like to know whether they know, and if they know how they got to know that very circumstance in their Great First Cause, alias, Incomprehensible Power, by which it was enabled to produce so stupendous an effect? But I forgot, they don’t pretend to know the universal power, modestly acknowledging its incomprehensibility.

I wrote an article on Power, while in Bristol gaol, for the “Oracle of Reason,” in which there is this passage: “If the word power have any meaning at all, it must signify something that exists, something that exists, too, of itself. Our senses inform us that *there is matter*, they also place beyond all reasonable doubt that *matter moves*. The existence of matter then is a fact—that matter moves is a fact—and that matter in motion produces or causes all the forms, combinations, and modes of existence we behold is another fact. Now, within the circle of these clear facts is included the sum total of human knowledge.”

Praters about an incomprehensible power, that moves the atom and controls the aggregate of nature, though not itself either an atom or an aggregate, may dispute the validity of this reasoning—but none will join them save those who are lame in their brains, as *Œdipus* was in his feet.

Take my word for it, this Power Deity, has no more reality about it, than “our father which art in heaven,” or the Cock-lane ghost, and believers therein must religiously shun discussion, if they have any regard to reputation.

William Galpin, late general secretary of your association, knew better than any other “genuine disciple of the system” how to maintain the credit of an incomprehensible God, though he sadly damaged the credit of your perfectly comprehensible society—for his one and only reply to objections of any kind, upon any subject, was, “I don’t discuss—I don’t discuss!” Lloyd Jones, and the rest of the “genuines” should take the hint—they should imitate the business-like, the eminently practical William Galpin, burk objections to their God, or their “system,” by a dignified wave of the hand, or Burleigh-like shake of the head, and a “We don’t discuss—we don’t discuss!” No Gods of my acquaintance will gain much in the shape of opinion, by being viewed too closely—as un-quotable, business-like, practical men, therefore, “genuines” never should discuss—for in discussion it will be found that, like flies in a spider’s web, the harder they struggle, the more firmly they will be fixed. Lloyd Jones, however, it seems will discuss *some* questions—he will not defend the *policy* of your society, but he will its *God*, that Immense Humbug, with as many *aliases* as Captain Marryatt’s

Pasha had tales—whose eternal employment is to push atoms and trundle aggregates. Lloyd Jones, is, in truth, placed in "mixed circumstances" just now, and cannot, if he would, deal with objections *a la Galpin*. Richard Carlile said, in 1830, "Mr. Owen cannot bear public discussion," and I now say Mr. Jones cannot bear public discussion—but his position is such that he must discuss *some* questions, or sink back into the obscurity from whence he emerged. As he undertook, in the genuine spirit of a disciple, to show the wisdom of his master's every word—he will no doubt attempt, in the forthcoming discussion, to clear up the mystery which hangs about Great Spirits, Great First Causes, Supreme Rulers, Immense Beings, &c., in whose existence I have no more faith than you have in the personal reality or identity of the wonder-working "slaves of the lamp," about whom there is such an agreeable story in the Arabian Nights' Entertainment.

Those who take the atheistical side, should bear in memory what has been said in a former part of this letter, about God-affirmers being pushed for "a full, true, and particular account" of their phantasm—they should be constant in their demand for clear definitions of God, tangible statements of those incomprehensible powers, natures, modes of action, and essential attributes. Juggling upon these topics has reached its maximum, and it is high time that men and women of sense should take measures to reduce it to its minimum, or, better still, to *extinguish* it.

Demand, then, of "genuines," reasons "derived from facts," for their master's extraordinary statement about "All facts yet known to man, indicating an internal or an external cause of all existences by the fact of their existence." Demand reasons "derived from facts," for their master's naked assumption about something internal or external to everything moving and controlling that everything. Demand reasons "derived from facts," for their wild jargon about a Great First Cause, or Great Unknown, about whom they pretend to know so much. Demand, in short, who and what their Incomprehensible Being is, for they are morally bound, as affirmers of his existence, to answer such reasonable demands, or at once frankly acknowledge themselves guilty of bringing philosophy into contempt, by the use of words which will not bear the test of sense, words explanatory of nothing, because representing nothing—words only to be defined by other words, just as indefinite.

"Pale faces, much book, no knowledge," say North American Indians, but did they say pale faces, much knowledge, *no sense*, they would be accurate in word as well as thought. White craniums are stuffed with knowledge and nonsense. These two, however strange it may seem, are found to fraternise there most cordially. To know, we are almost all ambitious, but to think, only a few take the trouble. Science being more esteemed than sense, no marvel that it should be more sought after. Good sense is left almost entirely to plebeians, vulgar folk, who rarely, too rarely, alas, condescend to pick it up. Were civilised whites more sagacious and less scientific, more thoughtful and less knowing, belief in unnatural phantasms and the multifarious religions of which that belief is the fetid source, would perish speedily and utterly.

It is incredible that any man of sense, any individual, the current of whose thoughts was unchecked and unpolluted by the lying fancies of priests, would hesitate to conclude that all the gods of all the nations are idols. His natural sagacity, if allowed a free course, would suffice to convince him there is really no more evidence of the existence of one God than of another.

But now to chase these phantoms out of sight  
By the plain magic of true reason's light.

A great ruler of the universe cannot be part of that universe. Now, universe being all, and all the universe, the idea of a ruler, great or small, not included therein, involves a contradiction, as it is manifestly impossible there should be any thing no part of everything.

This impossible great ruler is often spoken of by Robert Owen, as the internal or external cause of all existence, and of course Lloyd Jones will undertake the defence of that as well as the rest of his master's speeches. He may be able to show, but I certainly cannot understand how, *all existences* could have been caused by a *non-existence*. My long-settled conviction is that an uncaused something ever did and ever must exist, which uncaused something is the universe itself. If it be objected that an uncaused whole is inexplicable, I answer, an uncaused "something in nothing," capable of causing the *whole*, is still more so. To multiply difficulties unnecessarily is a laborious kind of mischievousness all persons of sense must condemn. Of two difficulties choose the least, say philosophers, and it is wisely said. Now those who invent a great first cause, because they cannot account for the universe without one, set at defiance the wise axiom, "of two difficulties choose the least," for of two difficulties they choose the greatest.

In No. 8 of this work, I laid down as truth incontrovertible\* that "He who is convinced it is more probable matter is mutable as regards essence, than that it was *willed* into existence by a Being said to be eternal and immutable, at once becomes an atheist—for if matter always was, no Being could have been before it, nor can any exist after it. It is because (I continued) men in general are shocked at the idea of matter without beginning and without end, that they so readily embrace the idea of a god, forgetting that if the idea of eternal matter shocks our sense of the *probable*, the idea of an eternal Being who existed *before* matter, *if well considered*, is sufficient to shock all sense of the *possible*. The man who is contented with the universe, who stops at *that*, has at least the satisfaction of dealing with something tangible, but he who does not find the universe large enough to expatiate in, and whirls his brains into a belief that there is a necessarily existing something beyond the limits of a world *unlimited*, is in a mental condition no reasonable person need envy."

Your attention is particularly called to the last quoted passage, because it is conclusive against those who foolishly imagine that their self-existent unnatural first cause is less *enigmatical* than the universe itself; of which they would have us believe it is the parent. An uncaused God we cannot see, and of which we know *absolutely nothing*, being to the full as mysterious as uncaused. Nature, or the universe, we can see, and of whose appearances we do know *something*.

It surely needs a much larger share of credulity to believe all things were created by a self-existent nonentity, than that all things necessarily exist, and though mutable in form, are eternal in substance.

Ovid taught that†:

To be born is but to begin to be  
Some other thing we were not formerly;  
And what we call to die, is not 't appear,  
Nor be the thing that formerly we were.  
Those very elements which we partake,  
Alive, when dead, some other bodies make,  
Translated grow, have sense, or can discourse  
But death on deathless substance has no force.

Lucretius also reminds us, that‡

\* See INVESTIGATOR, No. 8; article—"Comparative Rationality of Theism and Atheism."

† See "The Pythagorean Philosophy," from Dryden's Ovid.

‡ See "The Epicurean Philosophy," from Creech's Lucretius.



We should let this as the first rule be laid,  
Nothing was by the Gods of nothing made.

Again:

Wherefore, as nothing nature's power creates,  
So death dissolves, but not annihilates;  
For could the substances of bodies die,  
They presently would vanish from our eye;  
And without force dissolving perish all,  
And silently into their nothing fall;  
But now since things from seeds eternal rise;  
Their parts well joined and fitted, nothing dies,  
Unless some force break off the natural ties.

These two Greek poets had no idea of a First Cause, nor had any other eminent poets of antiquity—they all agreeing that

Nothing was by the Gods of nothing made.

The ancient philosophers seemed no less ignorant than the poets of a Universal Cause. Dr. Gleig, in a curious article on metaphysics, which appeared in ed. third of the Encyclopedia Britannica, says, "None of the philosophers of Greece appear to have believed a creation possible—for it was a maxim *universally* received among them, 'De nihilo nihil fit, in nil posse reverti'—nothing can come from nonentity or go to nonentity." For instance, when Aristotle writes of Parmenides and Melissus, "They say that no real entity is either made or destroyed," what can be his meaning, but that those philosophers taught that nothing could be either created or annihilated? He testifies the same thing of Xenophanes and Zeno, when he says that it was a fundamental principle of their philosophy, "That it is impossible that anything should be made out of nothing." And of Empedocles also, "That he acknowledges the very same thing with other philosophers, namely, that it is impossible that anything should be made out of nothing."

But it is needless to multiply quotations respecting the opinions of single philosophers. Of all the physiologists before himself and Plato, Aristotle says, without exception, "That they agree in this opinion, that it is impossible that any thing should be made out of nothing," and he calls this the common principle of naturalists, plainly intimating that they consider it as the greatest absurdity to suppose any real entity in nature could either be brought from nothing or reduced to nothing.

Now, it is plain that believers in a First Cause must suppose, not merely that real entities *in* nature could either be brought *from* nothing or reduced to nothing—but actually suppose that nature itself was brought from nothing, whatever may be their opinion as to the probability or possibility of its returning to the "same material." If the universe was caused, it of course had a beginning, and then—why then, Robert Owen is *perhaps* right, but the immense phantasm he so gravely assures us internally or externally caused it, was before it, if at all, that is, existed before anything existed, or there was anything to exist in. It never occurred, I presume, to Robert Owen, or any "genuine disciple of the system," that *universe* meaning *all existences*, *all existences* are the *universe*, and the idea of all existences, excluding the idea of any other existences, it is impossible that any one can, I will not say *know*, but even *imagine* a universal cause—a cause of all existences involving, as already shown, the contradictory notion of a nothing so immense and so potent as to create everything.

Of all nothingarians the holders of such a notion are by far the most curious. About the fire-God adored by Persians, the water-God worshipped by some elder Greeks, and an infinitude of other *material* Deities, whether elementary or compounded, to whom religionists did or do offer up their

incense and bend down their heads, there is tangibility, there is something to touch or be touched, something more than pure phantasm, but the God of Robert Owen and "the genuines" is neither elementary nor compounded, neither substance nor shadow, neither entity nor identity, nothing, in short, save what Lord Bacon felicitously styled "*idol of the den*."

In conclusion, let me entreat you, in the name of all the Gods at once, to get rid of all the Gods at once. They are all idols. I have proved them so. Away with them, for idol-worship is the curse of states, and never can the human race achieve earthly salvation till they turn from their present insane course with loathing and disgust. Let them cast aside religion as they would a contaminated garment. Let them laugh at their own Gods as heartily as they are wont to do at the Gods of others. Let them act thus sagely, and the day of their redemption will have arrived—then they will have reached the threshold of a new and superior state of society, in which God-belief will be unknown, and *truth* will supersede *religion*.

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

I.

MATTHEW makes Jesus say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." St. Luke makes him say, "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." Here, at starting, is a puzzle for the poor, which of the two does he mean? We presume we must not take away from holy writ, and therefore must suppose his words were intended in both senses. Matthew gives a spiritual, Luke a material meaning to the sermon on the mount. Says the first, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." Says the second, the verse after the blessing of the poor in pocket, "Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled." After the same fashion Matthew says, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." But Luke, "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh." In the same way Matthew, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for *righteousness* sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely*, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Luke says, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as *evil*, for the son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for in the like manner did the fathers unto the prophets." We will not stop to inquire how their name could be evil, when they were not called christians, according to the apostles, till at Antioch. In Matthew there is mention of righteousness, and the evil is to be said falsely of them for his sake, but in Luke there is no such limitation—the accusation, right or wrong—the merit was in the indictment being directed against them on account of their attachment to Jesus. Abstractedly there is no pleasure in being persecuted, a man may, for righteousness sake, both brave and bear with patience persecution. But to encounter suffering for another man's sake, and that sake to consist in his pretensions to superiority over the rest of the human race, or in making assertions contrary to facts concerning him, appears not only absurd but, as a moral command, highly injurious. Particularly when the obligations contracted for

his sake are contrary not only to the religions, but to the civil institutions of the country in which he and his disciples are citizens, or in which they may happen to be, and are, in fact, opposed to the physical notions of well being in any society. People may well be inclined to "speak falsely," that is judge wrongly, "revile," or condemn those who only present themselves to the public for the undefined sake of another unit. The world must either think those persons mad, or they must naturally imagine them bound together by some secrets which cannot bear the light. When these persons do not attempt to reason against the prevailing superstitions, but for his sake endeavour to introduce a still more incomprehensible one, which, by its own confession, has folly for its strongest recommendation—when they set up his kingship and divinity, and violate laws, religious prejudices, morals, the social relations of life—inviting the members of families to hate each other for his sake, when they proceed to overt acts and get punished when they leap for joy and say they are blessed, when they rejoice at it and say they are persecuted, that it is all for his sake, that they may receive perhaps temporal bliss, certainly eternal rewards—who are the most to blame, those who are compelled to put into execution the laws, or those who have to the utmost provoked justice, and held up this fulfilment of martyrdom as the highest species of glory? It does not speak well for mankind, or for martyrdom, that men should be found to endure sufferings and death, not for many but for one, and more often for the greatest follies than for any good to themselves or others. There is something noble, encouraging to imitate, and demanding our gratitude, to see a man risking his life for the benefit of his fellow creatures. There have been a few such philanthropists. But what shall we say of the selfishness of one who demands this sacrifice of others for his sake alone, and holds out the realisation of something in the never-terminating horizon of the future? What shall we say of those fanatics who suffer all for one, not to do him any good, or to save his life, but to gratify his extravagance or vanity, or those who place their selfish hopes in the monopoly of eternal salvation hereafter? We may pity or be indignant at his dupes, but what shall we say of the man who held out everlasting bliss to those who would become victims to the altar of unreality, everlasting damnation to those who refused to be crushed under the coming Juggernaut of christianity?

And now, when holocausts of human sacrifices are piled up from ages past up to this time, and beings are still found to suffer for his still undetermined sake, men have the effrontery, cruelty, or insanity, notwithstanding the preaching and the practice, to represent this sermon on the mount as the acme among codes of morality and philosophies of life. According to them its top reaches to heaven, which the rest in vain try to rival, it is a rule of life made necessary by the state of the world in which it was revealed by a divinity, it has reigned paramount in the past, and will continue of sovereign authority to the end of the world. The comparison which he makes of himself and his disciples, and the conduct of his countrymen towards him and them, with the acknowledged prophets, and the treatment they received at the hands of the Jews, is not just. The prophets preached God in the name of God, and avowedly for *his sake*, always professed themselves and their followers to be Jews, while Jesus preached himself and his own sake, and his disciples, separating from the Jews, went over to the gentiles, called themselves christians, and adopted quite another religion, to the rejection of the Jewish. Besides, the supposed prophets made a very good business of it, and with few exceptions were very successful in their vocations. They were acknowledged as the true prophets sooner or later, and made the false prophets suffer sometimes capital punishment. So that according to

precedent we should judge from the issue that Jesus and his apostles were false prophets and miracle-workers, that Moses foretold and ordered to be put to death. Deut. xiii. 5, xviii. 20.

Matthew has several blessings not in Luke, which, except one, keep to the spiritual meaning. The merciful are to obtain mercy—the pure in heart to see God—the peacemakers to be called the children of God. Paul has observed there is but one of the ten commandments with a promise. Not that Moses did not bold out very substantial benefits to the Jews—if they always did as he told them, they were to meet with every blessing under heaven, but none in heaven. Jesus determined that all his commandments should be attended with promises, and according to Matthew just the reverse of those made by the Jewish lawgiver. But after having exhausted all his spiritual consolations, all the possible imaginary rewards he could think of, he was completely at a loss how to recompense the meek, so he promised them the inheritance of the earth. This was the worst change he could have made from heaven to earth, as we need not say they never have possessed, and are never likely to possess, the earth. We will grant him, that backed by his other maxims, hatred, the sword, and his own example, his meek men have taken possession of the earth, and usurped all power over those who practised the virtues, and were content with the natural return they made, without seeking supernatural reward, or dominion over others.

Luke keeps to the material sense, and makes the curses of Jesus corroborate the meaning of his previous blessings. "Wo unto you that are rich: for ye have received your consolation. Wo unto you that are full: for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now: for ye shall mourn and weep. Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you: for so did their fathers to the false prophets." Now there is no harm in having sufficient, still less in having a belly-full, we never heard of any philanthropist who did not wish that all people should have enough. Jesus and the gospels were not so wroth with the rich when they showed signs of faith, gave their money to him and his, and paid him compliments. Publicans and sinners, the centurion, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, though they might be reckoned rich do not seem to have come under this sweeping clause of damnation. And as for the consolations of this life, Jesus liked them well enough when he could get them. Else how did he obtain the character of being a wine-bibber and glutton? Why attend on marriage feasts, and sit at the table of pharisees?—why call himself the bridegroom among his disciples, as an inducement to be gay and cheerful, if only those who mourned were to be made happy? The last two in Luke is absolutely ridiculous—it is the most extravagant pessimism, whatever is, is wrong. How the world could go on with such a maxim, is past our finding out. As a general rule that their fathers spoke well of the false prophets, according to their history, is about as true as the representation of their former conduct to the true prophets. We shall see, too, that it will meet with its contradiction in the 16th verse of the same chapter. The spirit of these curses is at variance with the blessings in Luke, much more with those in Matthew, and still more with succeeding sentiments in the sermon. We would ask how the meek, the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, could reconcile the conception of such miseries befalling their enemies? How the merciful who were to expect mercy could rest one moment satisfied in their consciences with such a sentence passed on their enemies? The commonest jury in this country, with the present amelioration of punishments, scarcely ever give a verdict without recommending to mercy.

Could they be called peacemakers, who entered upon this



eternal war with mankind, which was to end in their eternal triumph, and the eternal downfall of their enemies? The inconsistency is even in Luke, for how can people be said to be blessed, who, hungry in stomach and out of spirits, are to find it a sufficient alleviation of pains, mental and bodily, to think that those who are better off will endure the same? Or how can they be blessed, if in the enjoyment of seraphic bliss, they know those who were well off and content in body and mind are undergoing for ever the torments of hunger?—no kind nature giving them release, and every kind of physical torture compelling them to express their eternal mental misery by weeping and gnashing of teeth. The blessings, the rejoicings, the leapings for joy, the rewards they are to get in heaven, or on earth, are all in fact made consequent on the curses which are to overtake those who are in a contrary position. The rich, the full, the merry, a state of society in which most of the members speak well of each other, are to be the instruments of salvation to the lucky few, who want to be at peace with the world under any circumstances. Let it be granted there are prospective advantages for acting right, punishment for doing wrong, but why should anybody be rewarded for being wrong in mind and body? Take the states of the mind and body themselves, and consider them as they are recommended for the present existence. Is there any blessing in being poor, in having an empty stomach, in weeping? However necessary some people may think the deceiving the vulgar, what good is done in telling them such falsehoods? Religious imposture is bad enough, but this moral imposture is still worse, which would make the self-degradation of the people, an object of superstition with them. What rank hypocrisy, what selfishness in the upper classes, who finding the people in a state of destitution, tell them it is all for their good. We, say they, will keep what we have got, and a very bad bargain we have of it. All our temporal advantages will turn to our eternal misery, and your little privations, in proportion as you hug them to your hearts, will become your eternal reward. How they must laugh, when they find the people so easily gulled, or governed, that they won't hear those who offer themselves as reformers of the human race, unless they take up the old stock-in-trade of superstition.

Not to speak of the immorality in the exordium of this sermon, it infringes against the principles of law and justice. Laws are made to prevent crime, not for the satisfaction of the injured in the punishment of the criminal. No legislator thinks of gratifying people by the refinements of suffering which his genius may invent in the punishment of culprits. Such a course of proceeding would only be legitimatising revenge, would be malice *propense* in the governors and the governed, the appetite would grow with what it fed upon, cruelty would become an amusement, executions and sufferings the spectacles of the populace. Justice has to make people act, not as they would do, but as they ought to do one to another, and according to reason. It has not only to administer the laws impartially, but the legislator, in making, and the magistrates in executing the laws, has to see there is no difference in the punishment of parties, and that the punishment is in proportion to the offence.

We ask whether these axioms of Jesus have a semblance of justice or law in them? Some are to be rewarded because, from the properties of nature, circumstances over which they had no controul, or anybody else, or from immediate causes which they had provoked or not avoided, this life had been a course of punishment to them. They are told not to avoid these conditions, but to seek after them and be happy if they can attain by this experience of ills the fulfilment of bliss. Whilst others are to be punished merely because the contrary of these circumstances happened to them.

The punishment made consequent on the course of life obnoxious to Jesus, is not to deter from certain actions, not to prevent the commission of crime, but to gratify the anticipations of revenge—the thought now you have *your consolation*, presently it shall be torture to you and happiness to me. There is no justice, because there is no attempt made to produce any equality between the parties, and were it to ensue, it would destroy the rewards of heaven. There is no offence said to be committed by the rich against the poor, the allegation against them is the mere possession of competency, and need we say if this were an offence, the punishment is out of all proportion to the offence. This is the democracy of Jesus, slavery and tyranny in this world, to obtain slavery and tyranny in another, with a change about of persons, where the proportion of the tyrants and slaves, is to be confined to as few of the former as have arrived at an almost impossible standard of slavery even in this world, and to all of the latter who have not escaped the necessities of their nature, and as long as they lived, were guilty of eating, drinking, laughing, &c., oftener than their contraries. The extremity of woe, which is to obtain a blessing is almost impossible for any number, and is as imaginary and as far from fulfilment as the hell hereafter, which is to be the curse of happiness here.

If the blessings be taken in the purely spiritual sense of Matthew without the curses, it does not mend the matter. The poor in purse are also told to be poor in spirit, which must mean that they should not strive against the ills of life, and not only that but that they should bear with them and seek them. The righteousness which they are to hunger and thirst after, as explained, means suffering for his name's sake. To follow what is right does not require violent cravings, you may soon be filled. It is only an unmeaning nothing, the virtue of a name, supernatural longings, which can give to the mind the same feelings as the gnawings of an empty stomach. There is plenty of food in this world for the digestion and practice of virtue. But take the spiritual meaning and apply it to Jesus himself, as the example of these precepts in Matthew. Was he poor in spirit? When twelve years old, he ran away from his father and mother, questioned doctors, and despised from thence and ever after the authority of his parents. Was the spirit poor or the heart pure which gave to the mouth utterance in curses more often than prayers, and left hatred and the sword to the earth, and promised eternal hell-fire to the vast majority hereafter, for no offence? When he had tried to set all at variance during his mission, and promised that this object for which he came into the world should be fulfilled when he was out of it—was he the example of a peacemaker? Were they to accept him as the warrant of a blessing, when reviled and persecuted and all manner of evil was said against them falsely? Because the real case was that the evils alleged against Jesus in his ministry and at his trial were not spoken *falsely*, and he had committed a great many crimes which were not only punishable by the laws of his nation and of the Jews but of all civilized society, but which, according to his account, they did not bring against him. If therefore he was to be their precedent, christians accused of all manner of evil which happened to them, had the truth spoken against them, though that but partially, because if their case corresponded with that of Jesus a great deal more might have been said against them.

W. J. B.

## PROPHECIES AND TYPES.

(From the Boston Investigator.)

(Concluded.)

OF all the prophecies in the gospels, perhaps that of the re-appearance of Christ is the least obscure; and as it was

foretold by Christ himself, the supposed messiah, and the greatest of the prophets, it might have been expected to come to pass; and so his disciples seem to have expected. It is recorded by three of the apostles, that when Jesus had foretold the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, some of his disciples asked him, what should be the sign of his coming again on the earth, and the end of the world? Jesus, after giving an account of the wars and other afflictions which were to precede them, and which are mentioned in the book of Daniel, thus continues: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so, likewise, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.* Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"—[Matt. xxiv., 29, 30, &c. Mark xiii., 24, 25, &c. Luke xxi., 27, &c.]

What words can express more clearly the second coming of Christ, and the end of the world? They were to happen during that generation, according to the express words of Christ, and eighteen centuries are now elapsed without their having been fulfilled! Thus, the most extraordinary prediction to be found in all the scriptures, never came to pass, which proves how very little any of them are to be depended on.

With respect to the miracles which are said to have attended Christ, such as the miraculous conception, his being born of a virgin, and his being taken up in a cloud, and all such kind of fabulous and childish nonsense, they are only the echoes of antiquity, which priestcraft has made use of to deceive mankind. The Egyptians, and other ancient people, had an opinion, that the gods were accustomed to have carnal intercourse with the fair daughters of the earth, and, consequently, many celebrated characters were supposed to be of divine origin. Plutarch informs us, that Romulus was said to be of a divine race, and that he was afterwards taken into heaven, and had divine honors paid him. Others were born of virgins and goddesses. Others were inspired (such as Zaleucus, Minos and Zoroaster) by the divine spirit. Prophecies and miracles are not peculiar to christianity; they have been the constant attendants of every religion. The person who pretends to be favoured by Deity, must have something to show at his mission; at least, to make people think so; thence the curing of the lame and blind, the raising of the dead, and a pretended insight into futurity. These two false luminaries, however, appear now to be in their wane. The prophets and the miracle-workers seem to be travelling the same road as the witches and wizards of old; they will all of them ere long vanish, it is to be hoped, like Shakspeare's fabric of a vision, of which slight materials they have been composed, leave not a wreck behind them.

#### DEITY.

ACCORDING TO THE ORTHODOX VERSION.

(From the Boston Investigator)

THOUGH almost every nation on the face of the globe has imagined a God in some shape or form, yet no two have

imagined him the same. Sometimes he is a portly monarch, holding his court on Mount Ida, jealous of his queen, and of his authority, ruling his children and his courtiers with no little difficulty, and interfering in the affairs of earth, rather as a pastime in the intervals of his heavenly affairs and heavenly pleasures, than as a regular business; yet withal, a good-tempered, jovial Deity—hot-tempered, rather than wicked, accessible to love, moved by pity; and, altogether, a being in whose history and adventures we can take much interest, inasmuch as they often resemble our own. By other nations he has been recognised in the sun, asserting his power by his beneficent influence over all that lives and breathes, shining equally on the rich and the poor, and if he veil his glories for a season behind an envious cloud, bursting forth again in renewed splendor on the refreshed and glistening world. Then, again, he is an uncouth log, dragged along in a monstrous car, whose wheels are dyed with the blood of self-devoted victims. Among the Jews he was a God of battle and of bloodshed; jealous, avenging, angry every day, visiting the sins of guilty fathers on the innocent children, and the disobedience of our first parents, on us all; seen in the tempest, heard in the whirlwind; and presiding alike over heaven and hell.

It is no easy matter to say what he is among the christians. Sometimes he is a creator, good, benevolent, long-suffering, and slow to anger, whose tender mercies are over all his works. Occasionally (but this is rather a heterodox Deity), he is the great first cause of the universe, known in the wisdom of his works, seen in the beauty of his government, who

Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.

More frequently (and this is the orthodox version) he is stern and severe, punishing even unto death his innocent son, that he may obtain the power to pardon his guilty subjects; yet, even then, unable to save those who are not of themselves moved to penitence; devising a scheme of salvation, yet not desirous that all men should be good in this life, nor happy in the next; a God who sees it to be for the best that there should be sin and misery and an eternity of torment; a being perfectly holy and pure, and without whom nothing exists; yet, one who has created and permits evil and crime. Do our readers doubt the accuracy of our version? Let them read the following anti-universalist article from an orthodox paper:

"Universalists say, that as God desires that all shall be saved, and has all power, which enables him to carry his desires into execution, it is reasonable to suppose that he will save all. Now the fact is, he no more desires that all be saved, than that all be pious in this life. Nor has he power to save all, consistently with the plan which he has adopted for the regulations of the universe, any more than he has power to prevent sin in the present world. If, then, notwithstanding his desire and power, he does not prevent sin, how does it appear, that, in consequence of these, he will save all? The fact is, had God seen it for the best, he never would have made man as he is, and thus not only have excluded eternal, but temporal, sin and misery from the universe. But he saw this not to be for the best. He saw that it was better to have such a state of free agency and accountability as exists, with all their concomitant consequences, than not to have them. This is the only rational way for accounting for the permission of sin in the empire of Jehovah—a being perfectly holy and good himself. Viewing the doctrine of endless sin and misery in this light, as growing out of the present system of free agency, the character of God remains unimpeached, and the



argument that his desire and power will save all, falls to the ground. He has no desire to save any in impenitence; no power to make any penitent in a way inconsistent with the plan of free agency which he has instituted for the government of his intelligent creatures.

"Again. It is said that the wisdom of God never would have permitted him to select a plan which would involve the endless misery of any of his creatures, but would have enabled him to devise a way by which this would be avoided. In reply to this, it may be asked, could God have selected a plan different from the present one; that is, consistently with his wisdom? If he could, why did he not adopt one that would exclude temporal misery? But if his wisdom did not enable him to devise a plan to exclude temporal misery, how do universalists know that it would exclude eternal misery?"

Have we exaggerated the picture?

Is it not strange that reasoning beings should deliberately believe all this? God is perfectly holy and good, yet he has no desire to save all, even if he could; he is omnipotent, yet he has no power to save his erring and blinded creatures, even if he would! With his eyes open, he creates beings into infinite misery! With a perfect knowledge that it will not be resisted, he places temptation before beings whom he had previously created too weak to withstand it! He forms a sentient creature, who, of himself, can do nothing; and punishes him that he has not been formed otherwise! He desires that all should know him, yet he leaves us to guess at his existence!

What nation has conceived a God more impotent, more inconsistent, or more tyrannical than this?

## THE SOUL

(From the Boston Investigator)

THE following remarks, from an old author, in which the faculties of the horse are so ingeniously contrasted with those of our species, may, perhaps, be deserving of the consideration of those of our readers (if any there be) who still cling to the idea that man possesses a soul, distinct from his body; and that this, and not his more perfect organisation, gives him a superiority over other animals:

"My horse reasons; he knew nothing until he was taught; his mind or brain was a *tabula rasa*. He knows the difference between right and wrong—pleasure and pain. If two roads present, he will take the shortest to his stable, because it will the soonest bring him to the place most agreeable to him. He possesses those great properties which constitute the human mind—sensation, understanding, memory. I never heard of a horse being an *idiot*. They are all capable of education; they are all capable of instruction; they are all capable of a degree of improvement which none have ever attained. The organisation of the horse differs from man; each have capacities and excellencies peculiar to themselves. I excel my horse in the usefulness of my hands and tongue; but he excels me in the acuteness of his smell and his hearing. Horses, as well as men, are gregarious; they are a social animal, and have a physiognomy that expresses many of their passions and reflections.

"I have constantly noticed similar moral effects in the horse as in the human subject, arising from physical causes. They are similarly acted upon by similar agents—the only difference is in degree—and that difference arises from the different organisation of the two animals—sometimes exceeding in one, and sometimes in the other. The mind of man and the mind of the horse are subject to the influence of diet. If both are kept on low diet, there will be a corresponding mental depression, passiveness, and obedience—if both are kept well, spirit and gaiety is the effect. This

proves that the organisation of both is similarly acted upon by similar stimulus, and that the passions or ideas of both are acted upon by causes that act upon the organisation. The mind of the man and of the horse are made up of material agents—both minds are built up out of physical actions—they are combined from material causes—the minds of both are improved by practice, as the legs are improved in agility by the dancing master, or the arms by the pugilist. The legs do not think, because it is not compatible with their organisation—neither does the brain run—because that sort of motion is not according to its constitution. It is the province of one part to perform one office, and another part another office.

"Nobody talks about the immaterial motion of the hand; but if they did, the idea would be destroyed by dividing the brachial nerve; so that immateriality would be seen to be in the nerve. The case is exactly similar respecting the head, heart, or any other part of the body; they are all just as material as the hand. To say that any part of the body is moved by an immaterial principle, is absurd, because it is tantamount to saying, that nothing can move something, or that nothing and something are the same—which is foolish and untrue. In me and my horse all these physiological facts coincide. The horse and the man are well known to be capable of the passions of love and hatred, revenge and friendship. The horse has a tenacious memory, and is fond of music and hunting—and if he had the organ of speech, he would oftentimes make his rider blush with his good lash and reflection. The voice of the horse is entirely guttural, which precludes the possibility of his ever acquiring the faculty of speech. The knowledge of the horse is not only increased by experience, but, without practice, is subject to decay—and old age in each destroys the faculty of thought. A horse is acted upon by all the agents that act upon me. He is subject to similar diseases, that admit of similar treatment—inflammation, spasms, and obstructions. He is similarly influenced by heat and cold—refreshed by rest, and exhausted by exertion. Chemistry has detected no difference between the blood of the horse and the rider—the same properties are common to both.

"The horse has a smaller quantity of brain than man; a fact that would lead us to presume that if he had had the faculty of speech, he never could have arrived at the perfection in the sciences that some men have attained; but yet it is quite possible that by education he would have excelled many who claim the privilege of being his master, and put him to shame. There can be no doubt that the horse combines his ideas, or that there is a regular and connected succession of thoughts in his mind, relating to the same point. A horse knows the consequence of a proper or a wrong action when he has been corrected for a fault. He shows that he knows the consequence, by his alarm. Doubtless he reflects upon and compares his experience. It is only the fact I contend for, in opposition to the soul-mongers. I do not enter into the extent of the metaphysical qualities of the horse; that is a question not determinable; but I only show that they exist; that they are in extent much according to the experience of the horse, his education and the strength of the organization of the cranial members; by the cranial members, I mean all those convolutions, fissures, and protuberances of the brain."

(To be continued.)

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# THE INVESTIGATOR.

"Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of every thing must soon be found."—LORD SHAFTESBURY.

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TWOPENCE.

## SECOND LETTER ON THE GOD QUESTION,

*Addressed to the Members of John-street Branch of the Rational Society.*

The name of God hath fenced about all crime with holiness.—*Shelley.*

IF any error can fairly claim to be distinguished as the monster, it is the God error—for of the myriads palmed by cheats upon dupes as divine truths, none are comparable to it in authority, in absurdity, or in mischief. That error is the pernicious leaven which leaveneth the whole lump of human reasoning, and doth, like a veritable atlas, "bear upon its broad shoulders a world of immoralities." Of false beliefs there are no end—like those stars which, seen through Herschell's telescope, appear like so much "gold dust sprinkled on the dark ground of the general heavens," they weary the tongue that essays to enumerate them. You know this—you are aware too of the frightful influence of those beliefs—but many of you have yet to learn that belief in the reality of a Universe-Creating Phantasm, is the corrupt source whence flow all false beliefs. Robert Owen has fallen a victim to the monster error, and, in his turn, has victimised thousands. As a practical philosopher, he should have "stuck to common sense against the world," leaving those to speculate upon non-intelligibilities who could find no better employment. As a rational reformer, he should have taught *unmixed* truth, with resolute honesty—and either let religion alone, or dealt with it thoroughly. A practical philosopher, and rational reformer, such as Robert Owen lays claim to be considered, should never have dogmatised about the *confessedly* incomprehensible, but exposed the impudent absurdity of those who did—for wisely, as admirably, John Stewart said: "Were the fish to leave the water, and mistake the forest for their element of residence, it could not equal the folly of man in his mistake of the element of intelligence, in abandoning the clear and all-sufficient light of phenomena, to plunge into the darkness of incognoscible causation." Robert Owen committed this fatal mistake, this worse than childish folly, and lamentable are the results. Instead of exploding the God-error, he has strengthened it—instead of annihilating religion, he has contributed, unintentionally, I believe, but really, I know, more than any single individual now living, to preserve it in name and in substance. Miss Frances Wright observes, in "A Few Days in Athens," that, "Until we occupy ourselves in examining, observing, and ascertaining, and not in *explaining*, we are idly and childishly employed. With every truth we may discover we shall mix a thousand errors—and, for one matter of fact, we shall charge our brain with a thousand fancies." This is not the language of a "genuine disciple," but it is the language of common sense, a language, I grieve to say, that Robert Owen acts as though he did not understand. He is incessantly employed in the "idle and childish work of explaining what is altogether inexplicable," instead of occu-

pying himself "in examining, observing, and ascertaining." A mad, mad world, is this, and no wonder either, when the only rationalists who dignify its surface are neglecting "The clear and all-sufficient light of phenomena, to plunge into the darkness of incognoscible causation." Such rationalists are they of the school of Owen—"genuine disciples of the system"—who, echoing their master, tell us, "They *know* there is an *unknown* power, that moves the atom and controls the aggregate of nature"—who confidently assure us that experience is the *sole* guide of rationalists, and, in the same breath, that in the new moral world all will be trained to contemplate, with feelings of *high adoration*, the said power, of which, or of whom, they have no experience. Verily, this is *reason*, so much like *madness*, that I am not clear-sighted enough to distinguish between them. *Second-sight*, would doubtless enable me to view such questions differently, especially if the "true spirit of the system" were superadded—but madness, and nothing short of madness, I now think it. Frances Wright attributes all the modes and forms of human superstition, to a misconception of the real and only possible object of philosophical inquiry. So do I—and am of opinion, Robert Owen is the victim of such misconceptions. Indeed, this latter is not *mere* opinion, it is plain, notorious fact. His writings *prove* him to have totally misconceived the real and only possible object of philosophical inquiry. In *some* parts of his works, I grant there are passages which favour a contrary opinion. One, and the most explicit of these, may be seen at page 45 of the "Book of the New Moral World," where we are assured that when people are maderational, "They will know assuredly, and without shadow of doubt, that truth is nature, and nature God." There is "no mistake" about this. "Gross atheism of the D'Holbach school" is no whit grosser. Nature is the *only* existence, according to "proper atheists"—they *know* of no other—they see no evidence that will warrant *belief* in any other—they do not, however, call nature God, *as well as* nature, not seeing the utility or honesty of giving two names to one thing. Atheists, in general, scrupulously reject the *word* God, not merely for the reason just given, but because custom has associated with it the idea of *personality*—of some "*Immense Being*," more or less analogous to ourselves.

Mr. Troup, editor of the "Montrose Review," during his discussion with Lloyd Jones, at Dundee, in 1839, quoted this notable passage of Robert Owen's as indubitable evidence that socialism is atheistical. "Here," said Mr. Troup, "is atheism. Is nature an intellectual being? If so, let us understand it. I have always viewed that which we call nature as a confluence of material substances or elements. You have the sun, the air, the ground we tread on, all engaged in bringing forth natural products. Do these constitute one intelligent being, or do they enter into arrangements, form constitutions amongst themselves, and do the work of intelligent beings? Assuredly not. But we are



told by Mr. Owen that nature is God, if so, the Deity (so called) is unintelligent and void of sense." Lloyd Jones, who, it will be remembered, has undertaken to defend Robert Owen's *every word* (if the published report of the discussion may be relied on) was greatly perplexed by this well-pnt argument of his clever opponent. He floundered about most pitifully, applying himself to anything and everything but the *argument*. Troup wished to know how to reconcile belief in a God with Robert Owen's undenied assertion that *truth is nature, and nature God*. Jones replied by a general charge of garbling extracts, without taking the smallest pains to show the particular extract was garbled or unfairly used. Jones did not even attempt this task, the performance of which would have been equivalent to *finishing* his opponent. No, he charged the latter with producing a number of garbled extracts; and telling his audience they *implied* atheism, then read an irrelevant *rigmarole* about man's being, and feeling this that and t'other, and, by way of climax to the whole mass of miserable sophistry, said, "our religion" consists in "The unceasing practice of promoting the happiness of every man, woman, and child to the greatest extent in our power, without regard to their class, party, country, or colour." Troup, however, was not to be so easily disposed of. In reply to the charge of "garbling," he observed, "I have given you quotations, and I have been told by my opponent that they were garbled—I deny that—I have not garbled in any instance. I have read the sentences fully out; and, allow me to say, I shall not have it insinuated that I have garbled the sentiments I have commented upon. But if I have done so, there are the books, let him refer to them, and let him convict me if he can." He then proceeded to deal with the general question thus: "I want to know what is this supreme Being (Robert Owen's God) or rather 'uncaused existence?' Why, it is possible that they may only mean by the term a steam-engine in the interior of Etna, or, a waterfall on the Andes, or some machine in the sun, or, with some old errorists, the moon and the stars—and I require a distinct explanation of the meaning. And when my opponent favours us with disquisitions again as to the meaning of the term atheism, let that be plain and distinct also. If he will say that all are atheists who deny the existence of an intelligent supreme Being, of a first cause ruling over and directing the affairs of the world, or who deny the validity of the proof which we have of the existence of a supreme power, superintending, directing, and controlling all things—there can be no mistake. There can be no mistake if we find the acknowledgment of an intelligent supreme power in these five books. If we find any such acknowledgment, then socialism is not atheistical in that point of view. But if you do not find any such acknowledgment, then socialism must be atheistical, taking into account the character of the various quotations I have read from the books of reference. . . . I am not sure if Mr. Owen himself could sometimes recognise his own arguments, and I am quite sure you, his disciples, would not recognise some passages as being patronised by him. I will give you a specimen. The following sentence, as you know, is from the advertisement in the 'Dundee Advertiser,' to which we are allowed reference:

"It is of no importance whether men call this eternal, uncaused, omnipresent existence, matter or spirit."

"Mark this. We are told it is of no consequence whether you call that omnipotent existence matter or spirit. This was on the 25th July. Well, on the 24th August, Mr. Owen, in a letter to the Earl of Eglinton, writes thus:

"Physical force has heretofore reigned triumphant from the creation of man; it has now performed its destiny; it has produced good and evil upon an immense scale; and the time has arrived, in the natural course of events, when it

must resign its power to the accumulated experience of ages; and for the happiness of each individual of the human race, permit, without further contest, *mind* to govern *matter*."

"I wonder, in the language of the *very tasteful* lines quoted\* by Mr. Jones, if Robert Owen, the father and mother of both these extracts, would know them as belonging to himself. In the one you are told it is of no consequence whether you call the supreme power *matter* or *spirit*, in the other you are told that *mind* ought to govern *matter*. 'Permit,' says Mr. Owen on the 24th August, 'without farther contest, *mind* to govern *matter*.' Contrast this with what appears in the 'Advertiser,' of 25th July, 'It is of no importance whether men call this eternal, uncaused, omnipresent existence, *matter* or *spirit*.' Now, I put it to any sensible man—is it of no consequence to believe that we are capable of governing this eternal existence? Is it of no consequence to say that this eternal, uncaused, omnipresent existence, may be governed by man, the caused and finite creature? yet, when it is claimed for *mind* that it shall govern *matter*, and then, when we are told it is of no consequence whether we include this 'uncaused existence' in the general mass of *matter*—to what do we arrive but this most evident absurdity? I put it to any one to say, if any man in his senses could have written these passages?"

You will probably infer from these extracts that Lloyd Jones must have a happy knack of reconciling contradictions, and explaining away absurdities, or that he utterly failed to defend Robert Owen's *every word* in his conflict with Mr. Troup. The latter conclusion is the one a careful perusal of all that was advanced on both sides has compelled me to arrive at. Lloyd Jones is a skilful and not overscrupulous debater, but in Troup he found more than a match. As a sample of the miserable shifts to which Jones was driven, I will point attention to the commencement of his second speech on the second night's debate. Far from grappling with the Owenite, *not* atheistical, difficulties so lucidly and fully established by Troup, he spoke to this purpose: "Many of you will recollect that Mr. Troup, in the course of his long, but not over courteous speech, read from our constitution that part which stated that all were admissible into our society who adopted its principles, and adopted also the practice of the rational religion, and he said that this religion was atheism, downright atheism. Now," continued Mr. Jones, "let us see once more what this religion is:

"It is the unceasing practice of promoting the happiness of every man, woman, and child, to the greatest extent in our power, without regard to their class, sect, party, country, or colour."

"This religion, Mr. Troup calls atheism, downright atheism." So said Mr. Jones, but he said falsely—for Mr. Troup had neither hinted nor plainly stated anything that would justify such an interpretation. He was not so silly as to confound atheistical, or any other set of *opinions*, with moral *action*. The two words *just action*, mean *morality*, or they mean nothing. To confound moral *practice*, with religious or irreligious *opinions*, is an error so gross, that it is amazing any parties, neither drunken nor idiotic, should fall into it. If Mr. Troup had said the practice of promoting the happiness of our fellow creatures is atheism, downright atheism, he would have placed himself on a level as regards folly, with those who call such conduct rational religion, downright

\* These are the lines referred to:

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,  
Presto! his face changed, and he was another;  
And when that change was hardly well put on,  
It varied, till I don't think his own mother  
(If that he had a mother) would her son  
Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other.

rational religion. You may judge from this specimen, how far Lloyd Jones is competent to deal with philosophical questions. But the fact is, that what Robert Owen has written upon the God question, is utterly indefensible. Every attempt hitherto made to defend those writings, has signally failed. He cannot reconcile himself to himself, and no mortal man can do it for him. On the other hand, what he has written about rational religion, First Cause, &c. is most satisfactorily answered by Robert Owen. Take an example of this self-condemnatory kind of writing. In the Book of the New Moral World, page 28, he sneers at the priests who have "Decreed that man shall love that power which animates the universe, before he has any knowledge of what that power is." This passage warrants the inference that its writer thinks, that to command or decree that people should love what they have not the remotest conception of, is a fanciful sort of despotism none will desire, or if they desire, will be allowed to play off in the rational state of society. But, alas! for consistency—if we turn to an "Outline of the Rational System," we shall find it down in black and white, that when rationalised, that is, *owenised*, our breasts will be filled with feelings of high *adoration* for that incomprehensible power which creates, governs, and does so many other impossible things. Now, for the life of me, I cannot discover one tittle more absurdity in the priests of the old immoral world telling men to *love*, than I do in the priests of the new moral world, telling them to *adore* an *incomprehensible* power. To *love* an object we have no idea of, would be odd loving, I admit—but to *adore* something of which we know absolutely nothing, is adoration quite as odd, methinks. Nor can I make out how nature is God, as Robert Owen assures us in *one* book, and God is the creator, ruler, and preserver of nature, as he tells us, "all facts indicate," in *another* book. If nature is the only existence, of course there cannot be anything else to act, or be acted upon, and the hypothesis of an incomprehensible power, that "moves the atom," &c., falls to the ground. Again, Robert Owen asserts, that there must be a cause for all existences by the fact of their existence—but how can such an assertion be made to fit in with his atheistical dogma, that *truth is nature, and nature God*? Surely God was uncaused, his God, I mean, of course, or where are "genuine disciples of the system" to stop in their hunt after uncaused existence. But if there is a cause for all existence, and all existence is God, why there is no doing without a *cause for God*. Pascal declared men cannot say, by the dictates of reason, that God is—in which opinion I heartily concur, every hour furnishing fresh experience, which goes to strengthen my now old conviction, that belief in anything not natural, anything not part of the universe, is unreasonable, as it is demoralising. If it be objected that in uncaused, self-acting, imperishable matter, it is difficult to believe, and that to imagine it created by some power to us incomprehensible, is less so—I answer in the words of an eloquent female writer:\* "There is but one real wonder to the thinking mind—it is the existence of all things—that is, the existence of matter. And the only rational ground of this one great wonder, is, that the existence of matter is the last link in the chain of cause and effect, at which we can arrive. You imagine yet another link—the existence of a power creating that matter. My only objection to this additional link, or superadded cause, is, that it is *imagined*, and that it leaves the wonder as before—unless, indeed, we should say that it has superadded other wonders, since it supposes a power, or rather an existence, possessing a power, of which we never saw an example."

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

\* Miss Frances Wright.

# BELIEF IN BEING DISTINCT FROM THE UNIVERSE BROUGHT TO THE TEST OF ANALOGY.

II.

THERE are truths we cannot believe or even imagine to be falsehoods, as the truth that two and two are equal to four—the truth that hills have valleys between them—the truth that it is impossible anything should be and not be at the same instant, &c. These are self-evident truths, therefore undeniable. They are the only demonstrable truths, properly so called. An individual who should deny that two added to two are equal to four, that the idea of valleys includes the idea of hills—or that A can be A and not A at the same point of time—would certainly draw upon himself the charge, either of using terms without knowing their meaning, or of absolute insanity—for to deny the truth of a self-evident proposition, involves a contradiction, not only of phrase, but sense.

The truths of analogy are not demonstrable, that is, truths self-evident, though commonly confounded with them. They are derived from experience solely—which, though a tolerably safe guide, is, nevertheless, not a guide whose unsafeness is incompatible with possibility. Reasoning from analogy, we say all living creatures must die, sooner or later—but though it is an assertion warranted by experience, there is nothing contradictory, and therefore nothing impossible, involved in the idea of all now living creatures, *always* living.

There are few individuals, I presume, in or out of Bedlam, who have convinced themselves that the hitherto incessant circulation of atoms from body to body will now be stopped, and the sea of ever-moving matter be brought to a state without change or shadow of turning—as religionists fable of their Immense Phantasm.

No few doubt the destructibility of forms, though acknowledging the indestructibility of atoms—or are seriously sceptical as to all living matter dying, and all dead matter living.

But though those who are guided to conclusions by the lamp of experience, are morally certain,

All that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity,

yet, I repeat it, the contrary opinion involves no contradiction, and *may* be true. All dead things will be living, and all living things will be dead, experience justifies us in declaring; but none can be sure that future experience will be the same, or even similar to the past, and therefore the line,

All that lives *must* die

is dogmatical, rather than philosophical. The element of fire has for ages been observed to burn certain inflammable substances—I do not, however, see why it *must* burn such substances through all future ages. I allow, nay, I desire, to familiarise readers with the important truth, that the assumption of like causes producing like effects, is an assumption essential to all analogical reasonings, but still a mere assumption. Sugar, when applied to my palate, has invariably produced the sensation called sweetness—I am not, however, prepared to say that sugar always must produce a similar sensation, when applied to my own palate, or the palates of others. Rice has been known, from time immemorial, to nourish the bodies of Hindoos; but if in future, instead of nourishing, it destroyeth them—instead of wholesome food, it invariably proved rank poison—though



his predecessor of his place, on the old plea of extravagance, felt himself confined in his pecuniary resources, and, in order not to call upon parliament, rested for support upon his adherents. They for a while bore it patiently, but finally, on the ground of money lent and services unpaid, raised the revolt, which ended in the death of an archbishop (who did not prove a Becket), the defeat of the Percy family, and the confiscation of their property. But these insurrections so impoverished him, that they rendered nugatory all the other means and his professions of economy, so that, reduced to the necessity of throwing himself upon the mercy of parliament, they granted him liberal supplies, but with them held a most absolute power over their disposal. Wales, during this reign, from the emptiness of the king's treasury, may be said to have regained its independence. The people meanwhile continued their outcries against the possessions of the clergy, but the king seems to have judged it more politic to join the party of the church, the statute against heretics was passed, and the first martyr was burnt under the act *de heretico comburendo*. During the early part of his reign the commons seem to have participated in the royal and clerical feeling against the Lollards, as these reformers, recommending the total abolition of tithes, not only struck at church, but also at lay, property. But when the king had subdued his enemies, and, invested with power, thought he might look to parliament for assistance, their religion and their interest left them, in pursuit of what they considered the advantage of the majority, and, rather than pay themselves, they thought it better to recommend the king to a partial confiscation of church property, in order to supply his necessities. The bribe held out was not taken by the king, who left his son to cut the gordian knot, by the usual alternative of turning the attention of the people to some other modes of pillage and political excitement. The usurer luckily died early, as he seems to have lived long enough to have displeased all parties—the people by his support of the church, the clergy by the execution of their archbishop, and the commons by demanding supplies, and not being satisfied with the means they pointed out to throw the burden off their own shoulders. All were impatient to realise the possession of property, even the king's son could not rest in his impatience, they say, to get possession of the crown, and even put his hands in the pockets of the people. The Lollards and the protestants, who have generally given the example of an appeal to violence in the propagation of their principles, thought, in the accession of a new king, to display their power, and march to the accomplishment of their projects in the confiscation of property and the establishment of their political and religious doctrines. The king who had been early practised in robbery, wished a more extended field for his exploits, than the highroad, which he had been confined to as prince of Wales. He had seen the check to the people's desires in the infant infirmity of Richard, and the imbecility of his councillors, which prevented the career of pillage which the Edwards had pointed out as the proper course of English policy towards their neighbours the French. He had seen the disposition of the English people to prey upon themselves if there was no foreign provision made to satisfy their appetite for gain, in the troubles, deposition, and murder of his father's predecessor, and in the difficulties through which his father had to steer, which had risen to a more violent height on his accession and which threatened fresh convulsions if not prevented. The clergy, who were in more imminent danger than the king, saw their only safety was in directing the people to other objects of cupidity than themselves, and in gratifying the present good disposition of the king, by showing that there was other means of providing for himself and gratifying his restlessness, than by joining with their enemies

against them. Thus it was, that people, king, and clergy, gladly entered into a war with France, and disguised their avarice and the wrong, with a religious persuasion of their right to exercise robbery and consequent murder on the property and persons of a neighbouring nation. The situation of France, torn by civil distresses, was peculiarly favourable to English enterprise. It may be observed, though France did show an instance in Louis IX. of a monarch not wishing to profit by the divisions of king and people, but using his best endeavours in the case of Henry III., to unite parties, yet we have always eagerly seized any such moments of helplessness in France, or in any other nation, to inflict upon them all the injuries by which they may be reduced and ourselves aggrandised. Hume observes that all "Those great battles of Cressy, Poitiers, and Azincour bear a singular resemblance to each other in their most considerable circumstances." What he mentions first, as the most prominent, is that the English, "Merely for the sake of plunder, had ventured so far into the enemy's country as to leave themselves no retreat, and unless saved by the utmost imprudence in the French commander, were, from their very situation, exposed to inevitable destruction." The results of such a conflict were a still more disgusting struggle between cupidity and cruelty—the former averse, from fear of losing the ransom, to put prisoners to death, and the latter overpowering these scruples only by superior power of the monarch, who sent a chosen band to put his orders into execution.

W. J. B.

## THE SOUL.

(From the Boston Investigator.—Concluded.)

"My only object in committing this to paper, is to prove that the horse is not the brute he is represented. If he has not vocal organs, he has feelings. He hears, sees, and reflects, and has sensible nerves, as well as man; and that the one is quite as material a person as the other. If it can be proved that one has a soul, I will admit that the other has; but for my part, I can discover no other than a material rise and decay. The only difference between a man and a horse, is a trifling arrangement or distribution of matter, depending on one of the elementary laws of matter. It is quite as difficult to account for the origin of the first horse, as of the first man—they have arisen, like a cheese mite, from a peculiar combination of matter placed under specific circumstances. I explain by the term specific, such as uniform heat to an egg, and such of cold. An animal is produced by a combination of male and female matter; in this there is nothing spiritual, and any body may believe it, better than that something can be made out of nothing. It may be absurd; but the christians believe in a succession of absurdities; and it is quite as reasonable in me to claim belief in the rational powers of the horse, as it is for christians to require me to believe that I shall *live after I am dead*, except in a fresh organisation of matter.

"The soul-jobbers, in one respect, always appear to be in a difficulty. How do they ascertain the properties of the soul in the idiot, the insane, or in those animals that approximate as near to the lower order as those to the highest order of man? If the soul is the organ of sense, or the intellectual faculty, the idiot, and the insane, cannot have a soul. If they have not a soul, the soul-mongers must decide that men are brutes, if without intellect. If they make the soul and intellect the same thing, they must be in a dilemma—but the intellect is a matter of creation, and if the intellect and soul are the same thing, the soul must be created. If this were

we should undoubtedly be much surprised, we should see nothing in such unusual effects repugnant to our ideas of the possible—for that rice will always nourish Hindoos, is not a self-evident truth, any more than “all who live must die,” is a self-evident truth. They are both truths of analogy, not of demonstration—truths probable, not certain—finally, truths whose falsehood is possible, and therefore truths that may be false.

When a stone is thrown into the air, we naturally conclude that it will fall—but, prior to experience, we should as naturally conclude otherwise—it being natural for an individual who had never seen or heard, or conceived anything of falling bodies, to think, when first observing a stone thrown into the air, that it should *pass away in the direction given to it*, rather than it should, without any visible cause, return to the earth from whence it was discharged. A body heavier than the atmosphere, if flung up at the antipodes, that is, at the point of our planet, whose inhabitants are, relatively to us, with their heads downward, would fall precisely as it would fall if flung up here, which shows that the words *up* and *down* have a *relative*, not an *absolute*, signification, and that we know heavy bodies will fall through lighter ones towards the earth's centre—because *that they ever have done so, experience has taught us*. It is not demonstrable that a ball shot upwards from the mouth of a cannon, will *ever* touch the earth, any more than it is demonstrable that a child born to day will die before the lapse of a thousand centuries. Analogy proclaims that no child will live thousands of centuries—and that a ball shot from the cannon's mouth will speedily reach the ground—but we must not make the mistake of confounding truths of analogy with truths of demonstration—nor should we make the far more mischievous mistake of hunting in the regions of chimera, for existences analogous to those we find in the regions of reality. Where experience fails, there cannot be analogic truth. This has not been sufficiently considered by theosophical reasoners, who have brought analogy into contempt, by the disingenuous and absurd use they have made of it. These men, as though ignorant that experience is the root of analogy, and that where experience stops analogical reasoning should stop too, have rashly concluded that as houses or shops are constructed by intelligent builders, out of pre-existing materials, the universe, which is infinitely more stupendous, as well as magnificent, than ships or houses, must have been made out of nothing, by a Being—a Being so immense, that none can form an adequate conception of his immensity—so intelligent that the sublimest speculators are unable to measure his intelligence—so potent that imagination itself in vain essays to trace the limits of his power—in short, a phantasmagorical kind of Being—for, according to these *analysers-run-mad*, he *exists*, yet is without *form, entity, original, or substance*.

Were not men accustomed to allow fancy to usurp the place of fact, they never could have discovered the slightest resemblance between an act of *formation* and an act of *creation*, the act of *forming a table* for example, and the act of *creating a universe*. The skilful carpenter with the aids of axe, saw, plane, and other tools, will easily cut down a tree, and give it the shape of a table, but no carpenters are skilful enough to create trees, that is, call them out of nothing. Book-makers make books, they do not, however, *create* a grain of anything—they do not say, let there be paper and skins, and lo, there are paper and skins. No, they do not usually, I believe, make books after creating materials—but after purchasing or otherwise obtaining materials, make the books. Now, if it had been represented and proved to us by theosophical analogists that their phantasmagorical Being *fashioned*, but did not *create*, the universe, the analogy between his works

and those performed by human agents would have been complete. But *that* they have not attempted to do, and of course have not done. They have put forth all their energies to establish, first, that non-intelligent matter does by its action produce results infinitely more complicated and beautiful, yet perfectly analogous, to those intelligent matter produces by design. It is incredible, say they, that non-intelligent matter should, *without* design, give birth to effects more vast and astonishing, than intelligent matter *with* design can by no means equal. Having jumped to that extraordinary conclusion, having laid down as axiom incontrovertible that dead, or non-intelligent, matter could not accomplish the stupendous works *we every hour see it accomplish*, they naturally imagined there must be *somewhere* an intelligent being, who, though invisible, is perpetually employed in the tangible business of assisting or enabling non-intelligent matter to perform its marvellous functions. There is no idea more repugnant to *their* notions of truth and human dignity than the idea that matter *without* intelligence can effect results matter *with* intelligence contemplates with astonishment. Theists are ever marvelling at the gigantic powers exhibited by inert matter. It has not occurred to them that intelligence is only a quality of elementary bodies, when combined in certain proportions, not ascertainable however in the present state of science. The symmetry and order in our own persons, pointed at in the question of Antoninus is no proof that our persons were designed to be symmetrical and orderly, by an *intelligent phantasm*, but rather a proof that non-intelligent matter can, by the energy natural to it, produce structures amazingly complicated. If it be objected that man, with all his intelligence, has failed to produce so beautiful a piece of mechanism as his own frame exhibits, and that therefore a higher intelligence than his own must have been concerned in its formation, I at once reply, the premise is true but the conclusion is false, for man is only a *piece of matter*, and like all other pieces of matter acts by virtue of the elements which compose it at any and every stage of its existence. Now, because the body is endowed with intelligence it by no means follows that it should be either superior or inferior in energy and general capability to another body of equal weight *not* so endowed. Intelligence is not a force, but merely a quality. To suppose that because matter is dead it cannot act, is to suppose what is at utter variance with all experience. Matter without intelligence, or capacity to design, under certain conditions will produce a frog, and why not, under other conditions, a man. The truth is, we just as much know the conditions necessary for the production of a human being as we do the conditions necessary for the production of a chrysal. I recommend those who are sceptical as to the capacity or energy of non-intelligent matter, just to consider the astonishing rapidity with which electric fluid moves through conducting rods, the irresistible force of pent up water, when expanded by intense heat or intense cold. I recommend them to consider the fact that serpents and other noxious creatures are called into life by the action of solar rays upon marshy soils. I finally recommend them to consider the electrical experiments of the celebrated Mr. Cross, who, by means of his ingeniously constructed apparatus, made millions of an entirely new species of insect.

## MONEY THE “MOTIVE” IN THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

(Continued from No. 26.)

IN the next reign, that of Henry the fourth, the contention for money took various forms. The usuper, having deprived



the case, infants have no soul, and when idiocy supervenes, the soul must either depart from the body for hell, many years before death, or it must be something entirely different from mind.

"What becomes of the soul when the function of the mind is suspended by a fractured head, or hydrocephalus, or during delirium? If mind and soul are the same thing, the soul is material, or depends on the organs of the head; and if it is material, it must have always existed; and if it has always existed, it could not have been created in any given person; and if it is matter, it must always exist. It is different from mind, because mind does not always exist. As there is nothing separate from matter, and as mind is only the function of matter, it will cease with the peculiar conformation of matter that may now constitute the brain. If a black man has less intellectual power than a white man, he must have a smaller soul; and even the white man that has a great mind, must have a greater soul than the simpleton. I do not know whether theologians have reflected on this; but if they had, I suppose they would be too shrewd to divulge their opinions; they never circulate any thing likely to injure their trade in "loaves and fishes." It would be a very ridiculous thing to send the soul to hell, if it was not accompanied by all those acute feelings, sensations and reflections that usually accompany perfect health. Motion and matter accounts for all the phenomena that characterize the mind. What appears to be so obscure and unintelligible in the human mind, admits of natural explanation. There are many things inexplicable in the present state of our knowledge; but their being so proves nothing more than our ignorance; and no doubt many things will in time be explained, and appear simple, that are now abstruse and complex. Some ingenious anatomist may one day discover a mode of removing the skull so as not to injure the functions of the brain. However difficult such a task may be, until it is performed, the evolutions of matter alluded to cannot be demonstrated. The mind is as mechanical as the hand. Both are moved by those laws common to animal matter. The laws of animal matter and those of vegetable and other matter are only different in consequence of their elementary agents. The same combinations in both, produce similar effects in both. If the organisation of the white man's head is more perfect than that of the black man, greater intellectual improvements may be effected in one than the other. And in instances of idiots and simple people, there is either malformation of the head, or organic disease. There is not that arrangement, that tone or elasticity in the one as in the other: but this may be known from analogy in the motion of the feet or the hands, the formation of which is cultivated and preserved by experience. These members can do nothing but what they are taught, any more than the brain; both are the creatures of experience. I have not taken into account the difference of organisation, as the structure of the head or the feet enables one person to attain a greater degree of improvement than another. The most efficient organisation, and the greatest effort to improve, can only arrive at the highest attainment."

## ALKORAN AND THE MOHAMMEDAN

### RELIGION.

#### II.

##### MOHAMMED.

KORAN was revealed unto me, that I should admonish you thereby, and also those unto whom it shall reach.

Whosoever believeth not the signs of God, verily God

##### MOSES.

BEHOLD I have taught you the statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me.

God repayeth them that hate him to their face, he will

##### MOHAMMED.

will be swift in bringing him to account.

Say unto those who believe not, ye shall be overcome and thrown together into hell, an unhappy couch shall it be.

Do ye profess the religion of islam? Now if they embraced islam, they are surely directed; but if they turn their backs, verily unto thee belongeth preaching only; for God regardeth his servants. And unto those who believe not in the signs of God; and slay the prophets without cause, and put those men to death who teach justice, denounce unto them a painful punishment. These are they whose works perish in this world, and in that which is to come; and they shall have none to help them.

shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord.

Whether ye conceal that which is in your breast, or whether ye declare it, God knoweth it; for he knoweth whatever is in heaven, and whatever is on earth; God is almighty.

God warneth you to beware of himself; for God is gracious unto his servants.

Obey God and his apostle; but if ye go back, verily God loveth not the unbelievers.

Oh Lord, we believe in that which thou hast sent down (alkoran), and we have followed thy apostle (Mohammed); write us down therefore, with those who bare witness of him. And the Jews devised a stratagem against him; but God is the best deviser of stratagems.

As for the infidels, I will punish them with a grievous punishment in this world, and, in that which is to come; and there shall be none to help them. But they who do believe and do that which is right, he shall give them their reward; for God loveth not the evil-doers.

##### MOSES.

not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.

And when the Lord God shall deliver them (unbelievers) before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them.

Wherefore it shall come to pass, that if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers as it is this day. And it shall be if thou do at all forget thy God, and walk after other Gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord.

Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee. For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

The Lord thy God is a merciful God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them.

Ye shall observe to do therefore as the lord your God hath commanded you, ye shall not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left.

And it came to pass, when he (Moses) had made an end of writing the words of this (God's) law in a book, until they were finished, that he (Moses) commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against ye.

Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. Thou shalt not be affrighted at them (infidels) for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God, and a terrible. But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed.

\* Islam signifies the resigning or devoting one's self entirely to God and his service, and is the proper name of Mohammed's religion.

## MOHAMMED.

Verily, I come unto you with a sign from the Lord, for I will make before you of clay, as it were the figure of a bird; then I will breathe thereon, and it shall become a bird by the permission of God; and I will heal him that hath been blind from his birth; and the leper, and I will raise the dead, by the permission of God; and I will prophecy unto you what ye eat, and what ye lay up for store in your houses.

There is no God but God; and God is most mighty and wise.

Ye are the best nation that hath been raised up unto mankind; ye command that which is just, and ye forbid that which is unjust, and ye believe in God.

It is God who hath sent down unto his prophet Mohammed evident signs, that he may lead you out of darkness into light, for God is

most wise. Dost thou not know that unto God belongeth the kingdom of heaven and earth? neither have ye any protector or helper except God.

They who conceal any of the evident signs or the direction which we have sent down, after what we have manifested to man in the scripture, God shall curse them; and they who curse shall curse them.

God sent down the book of the koran with truth; and they who disagree concerning that book are certainly in a wide mistake.

To God belongeth whatsoever is in heaven and on earth, he spareth whom he pleaseth; and he punisheth whom he pleaseth, for God is merciful.

It is not the desire of the unbelievers, either among those unto whom the scriptures have been given, or among the idolaters, that any good should be sent down unto you from your Lord; but God will appropriate his mercy unto whom he pleaseth, or God is exceedingly beneficent. Whatever verse we shall abrogate, or cause thee to forget, we will bring a better than it, or one like unto it. Dost thou not know that God is almighty? Dost thou not know that unto God belongeth the kingdom of heaven and earth? neither have ye any protector or helper except God. Will ye require of your apostle according to that which was formerly required of Moses? but he that hath exchanged faith for infidelity,

## MOSES.

And it shall come to pass, if ye hearken diligently unto my commandments, which I command ye this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in due season, the first rain, and the latter rain; that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full.

Know therefore, that the Lord, thy God, he is God... a mighty God, and terrible. Dent. vii. 9-21.

Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.

Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God; the earth also, with all that therein is.

Behold, I set before you this day, a blessing and a curse; a blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day.

This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.

Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God's, the earth also with all that therein is.

The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face; they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee as holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plentiful in goods, in the fruit of

## MOHAMMED.

hath already erred from the straight way. Many of those unto whom the scriptures have been given desire to render you again unbelievers, after ye have believed; out of envy from their souls, even after the truth is become manifest unto them; but forgive them, and avoid them, till God shall send his command; for God is omnipotent.

And fight for the religion of God, against those who fight against you; but transgress not by attacking them first, for God loveth not the transgressors. And kill them wherever ye find them, and turn them out of that whereof they have dispossessed you; for temptation to idolatry is more grievous than slaughter; yet fight not against them in the holy temple, until they attack you therein; but if they attack you, slay them there. This shall be the reward of the infidels. But if they desist, God is gracious and merciful. Fight, therefore, against them, until there be no temptation to idolatry, and the religion be God's, but if they desist, then let there be no hostility, except against the ungodly.

There is of them who hearkeneth unto thee when thou readest the koran; but we have cast veils over their hearts, that they should not understand it, and a deafness in their ears, and though they should see all kinds of signs, they will not believe therein—and their infidelity will arrive to that height, that they will even come unto thee to dispute with thee. The unbelievers will say, this is nothing but silly fables of ancient times. And they will forbid others from believing therein, and will retire afar off from it—but they will destroy their own souls only—and they are not sensible thereof.

Be constant in prayer, and give alms—and what good ye have sent before your souls, ye shall find it with God—surely God seeth that which ye do. They say, Verily none shall enter paradise, except they who are Jews and christians; this is their wish. Say, produce your proof of this, if ye speak truth. Nay, but he who recogneth himself to God, and doth that which is right, he shall have his reward with his Lord; there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved. The Jews say, the christians are grounded on nothing; and the christians say, the Jews are grounded on nothing; yet they both read the scriptures. So likewise say they

## MOSES.

thy body and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasures, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other Gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall first be upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God.

The Lord will smite those who hearken not unto his voice, with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof they cannot be healed. The Lord shall smite them with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; and they shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and they shall not prosper in their ways; and they shall be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save them.

And the Lord shall make the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command ye this day to observe and to do them. And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day, that the Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou



## MOHAMMED.

who know not the scriptures, according to their saying. But God shall judge between them on the day of the resurrection, concerning that about which they disagree. To God belongeth the east and the west—therefore, whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the face of God; for God is omnipresent, and omniscient. They say God hath begotten children—God forbid! To him belongeth whatever is in heaven and on earth—all is possessed by him, the Creator of heaven and earth—and when he decreeth a thing, he only saith unto it, Be, and it is. And they who know not the scriptures say, Unless God speak unto us, or thou show us a sign, we will not believe. So said those before them, according to their saying, their hearts resemble each other. We have already shown manifest signs unto people who firmly believe; we have sent thee in truth, a bearer of good tidings and a preacher; and thou shalt not be questioned concerning the companions of hell. But the Jews will not be pleased with thee, neither the christians until thou follow their religion; the direction of God is the true direction. And verily, if thou follow their desires, after the knowledge which hath been given thee, thou shalt find no patron or protector against God. They to whom we have given the book of the koran, and who read it in its true reading, they believe therein; and whoever believeth not therein they shall perish.

These passages are word for word, as I find them in the writings ascribed to Moses and Mohammed. They are of equal, or nearly equal, length, and printed in parallel columns, that the reader may compare them, at little cost of time or trouble.

A single glance at those paragraphs, will suffice to convince any one, except he be a Jew, a mohammedan, or a christian, that they do not materially differ in style, and breathe exactly the same spirit. Those passages show that he who penned the koran, hated infidels, with an hatred no less intense than his illustrious prototype the author of Deuteronomy—the latter ordered his peculiar followers to smite infidels, to make no covenant with, nor show them any mercy, but to utterly destroy them. The former cursed them no less heartily, promising his followers that they should overcome them in this world, and have the satisfaction, when in heaven, of seeing them thrown together into hell.

Mohammed has, it must be confessed, the advantage of Moses, in his anti-infidel denunciations, and this solely from the fact, that the doctrine of immortal souls and eternal hells, so rife and generally accredited in the time of Mohammed, had either not been invented, at the time the books ascribed to Moses were written, or, at least, were unknown to the

## MOSES.

settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly—because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite with a consumption, and with fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land, powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou shalt betroth a wife and another man shalt lie with her; thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein; thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof. The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

writer. It would be blasphemy to affirm, in London, that Moses, or in Constantinople, that Mohammed, took God's name in vain, but they certainly did make a very free use of it. Without that "awful" name, neither of those prophets could have established their several religions. It is amusing to observe how frequently Mohammed uses the word *God*, and Moses the words *Lord God*, in the parallel passages. Moses assured the Israelites that he (Moses) was sent by the Lord God. Mohammed assured the Arabians that he was sent by God. The Arabians believed Mohammed, the Jews believed Moses. Being neither Arabian nor Jew, I believe neither—and certainly believe my infidelity rather more rational than their credulity.

To declare they were sent by God, and issue what they impudently call the commands of God, were tricks often successfully played off by impostors of the olden time. Some, however, were not quite so fortunate, having paid with their lives the penalty of their mischievous audacity. Lynch law has often been effectually, and, perhaps, usefully applied to such individuals.

The famous John, of Leyden, who had put in a claim like Mohammed and Moses, to be considered God's prime minister, was so unfortunate as to be carried about as a show from town to town, like any other rare animal, and was afterwards put to death with red-hot pincers, by order of the christian bishop of Minster. It seems that the anabaptists, having taken possession of the city of Minster, and expelled its bishop, wanted to establish something like a Jewish theocracy, and to be governed by God alone, but Matthew, their chief prophet, being killed, a journeyman tailor, named John of Leyden, from the place of his nativity in Holland, assured them that God had appeared to him, and appointed him king. He said it, and a large number of people, not thinking it possible that so honest a looking man could tell a lie, of course believed him—the ceremony of his coronation was performed with the greatest magnificence. There are medals extant which he caused to be struck on that occasion, on the reverse were two swords, in the same position as the pope's keys. Thus, being at the same time monarch and prophet, he deputed twelve apostles to proclaim his reign through all Germany. As for himself, he had several wives, after the example of the king of Israel, and went so far as to marry ten at a time. One of these women opposing his authority, he cut off her head, in the presence of the rest, who, from fear, or fanaticism, danced round the bleeding corpse of their companion. The king and prophet had a virtue not uncommon among banditti and tyrants, which was valour—he defended the city of Minster, against Waldeck, its bishop, with the greatest intrepidity, for more than twelve months, and during the extremities to which he was reduced by famine, he refused to listen to any terms of accommodation—at length, he was taken prisoner, sword in hand, by the treachery of his own people. Captivity did not diminish his undaunted spirit—on the bishop's asking him how he dared to set up for a king? the prisoner asked him, what right a bishop had to set up for a temporal lord? I was elected, said the prelate, by my chapter. And *I by God himself*, said John.

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# CHRISTIANITY AND FREETHINKING

ILLUSTRATED BY THE DISINTERESTED CHRISTIAN

EDITOR OF THE "GLASGOW CONSTITUTIONAL,"

ON THE ONE PART, AND

CHARLES SOUTHWELL,

PAID ADVOCATE OF FREETHINKERS, ON THE OTHER:

WITH

PRELIMINARY REMARKS BY SAID PAID ADVOCATE.

THE cheering fact that good oft cometh out of evil, is clearly manifested by the conflicting statements here submitted to the judgment of a Glasgow public. They are not dressed up statements, or of sectarian manufacture, but the whole truth concerning a small, though by no means insignificant contest, between Christianity and Freethinking.

I sought no quarrel with the Editor of the *Constitutional* or his Correspondents; it was forced upon me. They entered the lists, and championed Freethinkers "to the utterance." Mythologic history speaks of a Jupiter Olympium; and really it would seem as if the Editor of the *Constitutional* was resolved to erect himself into a sort of Jupiter Theologicum; his *aides-de-camp* meanwhile aiming at the performance of functions analogous to those performed by Mercury and Pluto, both equivocal characters belonging to that order classically denominated *Dii minores*. Assisted by these worthies, he thundered over the heads of all Freethinking orators audacious enough to "belch forth" ungrammatical "blasphemy," or otherwise emulate the "bold" giants who a very long time ago levied war against the gods.

I confess that the thundering of our Glasgow Jupiter disturbed me much less than the noisy demonstrations made by his heavenly prototype appear to have disturbed certain people in the olden time. Surprising me is out of the question. Nothing any newspaper writer, sold to a sect or wedded to a creed, may do, can possibly produce in me the feeling of astonishment. Editors are often men of ability, and sometimes "honest as this world goes;" but, in nineteen cases out of twenty, are unable to keep a conscience and belong to the class of persons who eat their pudding and hold their tongue with regard to errors or abuses the free exposure of which would leave them without pudding to eat. Surprise, therefore, was not the feeling excited within me when I found that the Editor of the *Constitutional* had published my first letter in reply to his attacks, after cutting the heart out of it, and that he declined to insert any part of the second. Both communications are, of course, given at full length in this suggestive and most useful little pamphlet, so that the reader has under his eyes the materials for thinking and deciding with regard to a contest which Christians provoked, and of which Christians should be ashamed.

The figure made in these pages by their *disinterested* champion appears to me a very pitiable one indeed. Convicted of attempting to burke rather than manfully overcome opposition, many who now believe in him will believe in him no longer. Only the most egregious of "dupes" will be cheated twice by a false accuser of Freethinking brethren; and these latter, by printing the whole truth, show how they appreciate the just observation that Luther knew very well what he was about when he threw the inkstand at Satan's head, for there is nothing that the Devil hates like ink.



## THE COMMUNIST HALL.

HAVING heard that scenes of a rather extraordinary character were occasionally enacted in what is called the Communist Hall, in Nelson Street, we were induced to go thither on a recent occasion, that we might judge for ourselves as to the truth or the falsehood of the reports which had reached us. From the name of the place of meeting we went with the expectation of hearing a lecture on some subject of public or political interest, and were quite prepared for being regaled with an outburst of Socialist or Communist oratory; but on arriving at the spot, we were somewhat astonished to learn, from a huge placard affixed to the wall, that the bill of fare for the evening was to be a "debate on Atheism." Ascending the stair and entering the hall,—an unpretending apartment, capable, we should say, of containing upwards of two hundred persons,—we soon discovered that those who were to be engaged in the business of the evening had not been left without the means of cramming themselves for their respective parts; for on a table at the entrance door we found an immense variety of publications, tracts, pamphlets, &c., of most ominous titles, ostentatiously displayed—such as "Twelve Reasons for the Existence of a God," "Twelve Reasons for the Non-Existence of the Devil," "Paley Refuted by himself," "Watson's Apology for the Bible refuted." Of course, "Palme's Age of Reason," and a whole host of others similarly designated, and most invitingly cheap. This partly prepared us for what actually occurred, though we are free to confess that we did not expect at this time of day, in the middle of the nineteenth century, and in the very heart of Christian, Presbyterian Glasgow, to have our ears assailed with such horrid sentiments. The hall was soon filled, and in a short time the chair was taken by a man of rather respectable appearance, who described himself as a Cockney, and announced with due formality that the question for the evening was, "Is Atheism consistent with the laws of nature and with common reason?" To give anything like a report of the debate (if debate it can be called) which ensued would tend but little to edification. Suffice it to say, that a young man courageously undertook the affirmative of the question, setting out with reminding his audience that it was a standing law or rule of their club, or society, or whatever it might be called, that no subject was so sacred as not to be boldly approached, and fearlessly handled; and to do the speaker justice, he gave most ample practical proof that he had fully imbibed the spirit of the regulation, and had completely succeeded in emancipating himself from those vulgar restraints of reverence, or superstition, as he called it, by which, in dealing with matters of religion, the great bulk of the community are still happily content to be in some degree restrained. We will not offend our readers, or disgrace ourselves by transferring to our columns the bold blasphemies which this unfledged but unscrupulous orator unblushingly belched forth, though truth compels us to admit that they were evidently responded to by the great proportion of his audience; but it may astonish our readers, as assuredly it did astonish ourselves, and may at the same time serve as a specimen of the line of *argument* indulged in, to hear it gravely enunciated as a fact beyond all controversy, that the progress of civilisation has invariably advanced *pari passu* with the progress of *Atheism*! This bold champion of the non-existence of a deity was followed by others on the opposite side, but we grieve to say that they utterly failed either in exposing his miserable sophisms, or putting down his reckless assertions. Indeed, the whole discussion was conducted on both sides with a levity and an affectation of wit as unsatisfactory as they were unbecoming. We did not wait to the close; we were so disgusted with the entire exhibition that we were thankful to make our escape, and seemed to breathe more freely when we felt ourselves beyond the reach of its contaminating atmosphere.

Were it not for the moral effect of the scene which we have most imperfectly sketched, we should not, perhaps, have thought it worth our while to allude to the affair at all. As a debate, or display of small intellectual gladiatorialship, the thing was purely contemptible. Argument on either side, strictly speaking, there was literally none, the combatants only showing so much acquaintance with their subject as not to understand it, as to mystify themselves, and possibly to perplex others whose information was not more extensive than their own. Of *bodily* eloquence, indeed, there was enough and to spare. The tear and wear of lung, and the expenditure of manual labour were tremendous. Never was the Queen's English more severely murdered, or our old friend Lennie's rules of grammar more magnanimously set at naught. In these respects the thing was simply ludicrous; and had the subject of dispute been one purely intellectual, or philosophical,



or even social, it might have been left to work its own cure. But it is very different when questions so vitally affecting the welfare, nay the existence, of society, are, in the language of the Hall, so boldly approached and so fearlessly handled; and the effect can be only and altogether bad, unsettling the mind as to the very first principles of religion, and, by consequence, of all social order, and habituating the tongue and the ear to the uttering and the hearing of words and of sentiments at which every feeling even of common decency revolts. Let the character of the audience, too, be carefully noted, for this appeared to us the most alarming feature in the whole affair. It consisted not of the mob, not the mere rabble, the unwashed, unshaven, and unshorn. On the contrary, it was composed, for the most part, we might say almost entirely, of respectable, well-dressed, intelligent-looking young tradesmen, the very life-blood of our country, the parties who are to give the stamp to the coming generation, and yet the very parties who, from their situation and their circumstances, are the most likely to be infected by the moral poison which in such places is so abundantly diffused. It may perhaps be a question how far the civil authorities are entitled to interfere in such a case, or, admitting their right, how far it would be prudent to exercise it. But there can be no question that it is the duty of every good citizen, of every one who wishes well to society, to discourage all such assemblages—and it is with the view of putting parents and masters, and employers on their guard that we have apprised them of the existence in the midst of them of so prolific a source of evil to the young people under their charge.

*To the Editor of the Glasgow Constitutional.*

MR EDITOR,—The *exposé* of certain blasphemous proceedings in that sink of infidelity known as "Communist Hall," Nelson Street, which appeared in the "Constitutional" of Wednesday last, cannot fail to shock and alarm the religious part of our population. To me it is astonishing that the Glasgow press has so long been silent with regard to the doings of a set of persons who, openly and in the very midst of us, preach doctrines subversive of our holy religion. It is notorious, not only that Communists discuss on Saturday evenings the most awful mysteries, but also that atheistical discourses are, every Sabbath morning and evening, delivered to respectable looking audiences, by Charles Southwell—the "man of rather respectable appearance who filled the chair" on the occasion to which your admirable article referred. Now lying before me is the "Oracle of Reason," of which he was Editor, and for publishing which he was prosecuted, and I am bound to say anything so daringly impious never before fell under my notice. In it the anchor of our safety is denounced as "the idol of all sorts of blockheads, the glory of knaves, and the disgust of wise men." In it we are told that "the God of the Jews, did such a Being exist, would be a monster made up of every conceivable deformity; and if we can imagine a demon God, then we may conceive the Bible written through his inspiration." As if unsatisfied with brutal pre-eminence in irreligion, this unhappy sophist lately published a book for the express purpose, it would seem, of demonstrating his utter contempt for the common decencies of life. Lest I should be suspected of exaggeration or passionately sketching a monster rather than a man, it may be well to quote from the work last referred to some three or four of the most significant but by no means the most abominable passages—they are given *verbatim et literaliter*. "Our political like our religious system will not bear discussion. Take the sceptre, break it—it is the King. Take the Cross, break it—it is the Priest." "The habit of thinking freely on all matters long since led me to the conclusion that the dead are truly 'but as pictures'—a corpse being no more a human creature than the soil of the Nile is the serpent that crawls upon its banks." [Several other quotations follow with which we cannot pollute our pages.] Now, Mr Editor, I put it to every religious reader of your paper whether a man capable of deliberately writing and publishing such pestiferous doctrines as these, is not eminently dangerous? I demand, moreover, whether, with the fact patent to all of us that such a man is busily employed in the detestable work of spreading anarchical opinions, and seducing sheep from the fold of Christ, the press of Glasgow should, by its silence, give the *appearance* of consent to so flagrant an outrage upon the political feeling and religious instinct of this land. Let no one imagine this Southwell and his misguided partisans are too contemptible for serious notice—an error of that kind may lead to deplorable consequences. The self-styled Atheists of Glasgow are, with few



exceptions, men of more than ordinary intelligence, and it would be idle to deny that their present paid advocate, though vain, unscrupulous, and reckless, is an able lecturer, and more able debater. No other Atheist by whom this city has been disgraced, has so well succeeded in attracting and keeping together a large number of dupes. It is for the press to take the sting from the serpent, and heartily do I thank you, Sir Editor, for boldly commencing so good a work. Christianity has nothing to fear from opposition, if the Christian press do well play its part. Willing so far as able to assist in "squelching," by moral means, the enemies of our faith, I remain yours, &c.,

Glasgow, 15th Jan., 1852.

H. F.

*To the Editor of the Glasgow Constitutional.*

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to render my personal thanks for your account in the *Constitutional* of Wednesday, of a late visit to the Communist Hall. Many good people think it best to take no notice of places like it in public at all, because those who frequent them desire nothing so much as to be talked about, and would think they had attained to eminence if any person noticed their performances in the newspapers. I respect the people who, from considerations like these, would permit the "new lights" to remain for ever unknown; but, when we consider "the moral effects of such scenes," the case demands different treatment. To persons even of very limited knowledge, the "debate," or "display of small intellectual gladiatorship," as you well term it, may indeed seem a thing purely contemptible; but young men of a certain turn of mind are very easily led away with noisy declamation, and are in danger of being captivated by the bold, if not profane, treatment of sacred things. Orators who appear on such platforms, are wonderfully voluble, and have no end of sentimental nothings, mingled with a spice of bold assertion, seasoned with a few set phrases setting forth their own world-wide liberalism, which commiserates, rather than condemns, what they call the superstitious portion of their fellow-men; and these sentiments are ever ready to be delivered with any amount of "bodily eloquence," if so be that they may produce an effect upon the susceptible minds of the young.

You have well said that it is the "duty of every citizen to discourage such assemblages;" and you have done the community a great service in drawing attention to the evil; but there is one thing which occurs to me should be forced upon the attention of every Christian man in the community, and that is, the necessity of setting up a counter-attraction. I am very sure, from what has come under my own observation, that the bulk of the young men who frequent such places, is made up of those who have come from the country, or who are fatherless, or if not orphans, at least without any one to care for them, to direct their studies, and assist them in coming to right conclusions.

Let every Christian man who sees the magnitude of the evil, set about at once the gathering of a class, or meeting of young men around him; let him act towards them as an elder brother, meeting with them once on the Sabbath-day, and during the week if possible; let him seek opportunities of doing them good at all times; and, above all, let them be instructed by the highest of all eloquence, the eloquence of a godly life; and in a short time the young men so trained will loathe as much as their teachers can do, the trifling nothings of the Communist Hall. This mode of meeting the evil is already practised by a considerable number of devoted and worthy men, and their labours have already yielded fruit; but there is more than ever need that hundreds of the best men the churches can afford should join in the same noble work. Any dweller in Glasgow needs not to be told of the thousands of young men who stroll our streets on a Sabbath evening, caring for none, and being cared for by none. The ordinary Sabbath School is not adapted for them. Let the best and most experienced men that can be found, step forward, and each become the centre of influence to a circle of youths, and they will not labour in vain.—Yours, &c.,

W. G. M.

*To the Editor of the Glasgow Constitutional.*

SIR,—It is scarcely credible that you are ambitious to get up a crusade against my clients, or, if you please, "dupes" of the Communist Hall; and yet there are alarming evidences of a disposition on your part to emulate the redoubtable Hermit Peter, who provoked "the world's debate." Though two of the articles



concerning Freethinkers, which have recently appeared in the *Constitutional*, were furnished by correspondents, still they were supplementary to your own, and may fairly be dealt with as editorial.

The first observation I have to make is simply this—If you deem it politic or necessary to carry war into the camp of Glasgow Freethinkers, do fight the good fight as becometh a Christian of the nineteenth century, and not in the ruthless spirit of a North American Indian, or hypocritical spirit of an Aminadab Sleek. If resolved to “squell” those unbelieving persons, let the thing be done by purely “moral means” according to the recommendation of a Christian correspondent. They have been held up to contemptuous reprobation, but so far have got no opportunity to vindicate themselves. No doubt you will gladly find a place in your columns for what they have to say, if it be to the purpose, and compressed within reasonable limits.

Being their “paid advocate,” and as such, singled out for special condemnation, I take upon myself the business of making some sort of defence.

That Glasgow Freethinkers are persons of more than average intelligence has been admitted; but, then, some of them occasionally offend against “the rules of grammar!” Now, such being the fact, I see no great wrong in your publishing it; but, then, the same may be said, with equal truth, of many who condemn them. Christians are not always hard students of Lindley Murray, though mayhap deep in their devotion to John Knox. When the spirit moveth they are apt to be careless about forms of speech; and as you were candid enough to admit that such of them as took part in the discussion which has caused so much irritation were miserably wanting in argument, no doubt you will also admit that their grammar was every way worthy to keep their argument company. Of course Atheists (as you call them) are none the less reprehensible for murdering the Queen’s English, because Christians set the example; for, as somebody or other wisely said, two blacks don’t make a white. Seeing, however, that Christians are not expected to be first-rate grammarians, and seeing that some respectable divines are of opinion the less Christians know about grammar or any other science the better, I think your fling at Freethinking parts of speech uncalled for, and manifests rather the spirit of a pedagogue than a philosopher.

It is not my intention to defend “bold blasphemies,” or say a word on behalf of “the unfledged but unscrupulous orator” who may have “belched them forth.” I am, however, bound to declare that such charges, being very serious ones, should not be lightly made. Nothing more easy than to accuse the opponent of some pet theological crotchet or superstitious creed with “bold blasphemy.” Nothing more easy than to denounce him as “unfledged and unscrupulous;” but a follower of that Jesus, who, we are told, bore his faculties meekly, and when reviled, reviled not again, should eschew the use of hard names, and remember that if he would convert opponents, an ounce of argument is worth whole tons of vituperation. Hast yet to learn, Mr Editor, that more flies are caught by honey than vinegar?

Had you been satisfied merely to animadvert upon the oratorical shortcomings of my Freethinking friend, your statements might have been allowed to pass unchallenged; but you have declared that he was “the bold champion of the non-existence of Deity”—a declaration I object to, as not sufficiently exact. Being in the chair upon the occasion referred to, I may be presumed to know something about “the line of argument indulged in.” That argument, which you appear strangely to misconceive, had no reference to a barren negation, but to positive assertions made by Theists. The orator, if less regardful than he might be of “Lennie’s rules of Grammar,” is sufficiently skilled in rules of logic to understand the absurdity of attempting to *prove* a negative. By the term Atheist, he meant, and expressly said he meant, one who rejects the hypothesis of the Theist on the ground that such hypothesis is unsustained by evidence.

#### SUPPRESSED PASSAGES.

It is one thing to deny the reality of what men call God, and another thing to deny that Theists have proved “Him” to exist. You were grieved to find the Christian party so much at fault, and well you might be; but, Sir, it should be remembered that they who affirm what, from the nature of things, cannot be logically proved, have rather up-hill work to perform. Calling me “Atheist” is, to borrow your own choice language, “simply ludicrous” and “purely contemptible.” Atheism



implies Theism, just as wisdom implies folly, but what Theism means Theists have yet to discover. When they contrive to be intelligible touching "the mystery of godliness," we Freethinkers may agree with them. We deny that Atheism is logically possible, because words which signify (if indeed they signify anything) the absence of an idea, cannot form the groundwork of a positive conclusion. It is idle to bandy about mere thingless terms or senseless epithets; Theists are frequently thus employed, and to them, Mr Editor, not to us, will apply what you have said about "miserable sophisms and reckless assertions." Where meet we with recklessness of assertion in perfection if not in finite man asserting his knowledge of the Infinite? Where shall we look for miserable sophisms, if not in the pretender to a comprehension of the avowedly Incomprehensible? Against the "sentimental nothings" and lip piety of such as would fain palm upon us, as divinity, the mere drivelling of idiocy, I have for years protested, but your correspondent H. F. will perhaps be surprised to learn that Atheism may as justly be charged upon *him* as upon *me*. That such is the fact, the following brief extract from a letter to John Potter, Mayor of Manchester, written and published by me in 1849, doth, I think, demonstrate:—

"Men call me Atheist, but Mr Mayor, I am neither more nor less Atheistical than yourself. All are Atheists, if Atheism mean the rejection of idolatrous deities—in such we both disbelieve, and therefore to such offer no homage. The prophet of the Hebrews denounced all the gods of all the nations as idols—I do no more. To be without the gods other men set up is popularly imagined a sign of Atheism, but what those gods are none know, and yet until they are known nothing can be more illogical than to say this or that man is 'without' them. In logical strictness we are bound to admit the impossibility of Atheism, for not only are the ways of God past finding out, but infinite existence of any supposed kind, character, or description, fall not within the boundaries of finite conception."

It is true, that during many years I was silly enough to pronounce myself Atheist, and so recently as 1848 I published "An Apology for Atheism," but having since then *unlearned* many things, I am not now ashamed to avow my deliberate conviction that in point of absurdity your Atheist is fully equal to your Theist. Both talk nonsense—both are fundamentally illogical—both have helped to precipitate society into the bottomless pit of delusion. If you, Sir, have hitherto believed Atheism possible, believe it no longer. Whenever Theism becomes intelligible, then Atheism may be possible, but not till then.

You deplore "the moral effect of such scenes" as you witnessed in Communist Hall. Now, oddly enough, we (that is, myself and "dupes") deplore "the moral effect of such scenes" as may every Sabbath-day be witnessed at Kirk. To our mental vision, there are few spectacles more "horrid" or "disgraceful" than that of full-grown men tremulously articulating unintelligibilities, and crouching like whipped spaniels before some preacher of "bold blasphemies," nicknamed "divine truths." In regard to a state beyond the grave we dogmatize not, but say with Addison—darkness, clouds, and shadows rest on all subjects connected with the eternal destiny of man. And if Socrates was honoured for declaring in the teeth of Pagan superstitions—*What is above us should not concern us*, why are we Freethinkers so harshly treated for refusing to concern ourselves about Being and things inaccessible to the highest reason? It will be said that Socrates taught the doctrine of immortality; to which by anticipation I reply—So do we, but not in the popular or superstitious sense. Our conviction is that immortality may be predicated of all real existence. But what kind of immortality? Aye, there's the rub. You know not; neither do I; and the ministers of religion are upon this matter just as knowing as ourselves. But they, disliking to appear ignorant, preach eloquent



sermons, made up chiefly of words which "darken counsel" and debase intellect. Their mode of dealing with the spiritually sick reminds one of the rich valetudinarian who called in a physician to cure some imaginary disorder. The physician felt his pulse, and inquired—Do you eat well? Yes, said the patient. Do you sleep well? I do. Then, said the Esculapius, I shall give you something to take away all that. Our Doctors of Divinity have here their perfect prototype. If he would have physicked out of his patients the disposition for sleep or food, they would, by draughts miraculous and pills prophetic, spirit away from their patients the mental strength and peace without which life is a burthen and a curse.

Before concluding, I feel called upon, notwithstanding our many serious differences of opinion, to thank you for the really handsome acknowledgment, that my audiences, though "dupes," consist "not of the mob, not the mere rabble, the unwashed, unshaven, and unshorn; but for the most part, nay, almost entirely, of respectable, well-dressed, intelligent-looking tradesmen—the very life-blood of our country." A compliment such as this, Sir, is pleasant balm for all the wounds you have inflicted upon me, none of which, however, I am happy to add, in the language of Mercurio, are so deep as a well or so wide as a church door.—With all due respect, yours, &c.,

CHARLES SOUTHWELL

Glasgow, 18th Jan., 1852.

[Mr Southwell may perhaps raise the cuckoo cry of intolerance and unfairness because we have ventured to cut out the heart of his communication. But our readers will pardon us when we inform them that what we have withheld consists chiefly of an extract from the writer's own works, in which he indulges in a strain of the grossest infidelity, and modestly compares himself to Socrates, and the Hebrew Prophet denouncing the gods of the nations. We have no objection to allow him to correct any mis-statements which have appeared in our columns, for we are anxious to deal fairly even with the orators of the Communist Hall, but we cannot permit the *Constitutional* to be made the conduit for conveying to the public such a foul stream as that which Mr Southwell seeks to direct against the purity and well-being of society. Our readers will judge, from what we have given, of the fitness of Mr Southwell to act the part of a moral teacher. His empty flippancy and affectation of wit are characteristic of the class to which he belongs.]

*To the Editor of the Glasgow Constitutional.*

SIR,—The disingenuous manner in which you treated my former communication naturally begets a suspicion that, as regards strict adherence to truth, you are not exactly an Epaminondas; and that opponents, or at all events, Free-thinkers, who rely upon your sense of justice, will find themselves deceived.

Attacked in your paper—held up to public obloquy, as "vain, reckless, unscrupulous" as "duper" of those who trust me, and chief actor in scenes most awfully demoralising—I, not desiring such serious charges should go unrebuted, forward you a letter. Instead of publishing the *whole* of it, you suffer but a *part* to meet the eyes of your readers—the omitted passages, strangely enough, being just those without which my defence is a nullity. Truly they were, as you admit with such amusing *naïveté*, the "heart" of my letter. Now, what you or others may think, I know not, but cutting out the "heart" of an opponent's defence against slanderous accusations does appear to me very queer "intellectual gladiatorship," indeed, and rare example of the way some Christians fight the good fight of faith.

But this is not *all* of which I have just cause to complain.

As if triumph, not truth, were your object, and as if insult should be added to injury, you comment upon and misrepresent the suppressed passages. My mere reference to language ascribed to Socrates and the prophet of the Hebrews is ridiculously misinterpreted, and upon the strength of such misinterpretation, I am accused of comparing myself with those worthies. Never before, during the whole course of my rather long experience, do I remember to have met so "reckless" a combination of the *suppressio veri* with the *suggestio falsi*.

We hear much declamation against Jesuits, but you, Sir, at all events, should, in future, hold your peace with regard to them, for no disciple of the school of



Loyola ever dealt with heretics less candidly than you have dealt with me. The "heart" of my letter, if published, would convict you of reckless suppression of truth, and equally reckless suggestion of falsehood.

What you, Sir, have deemed it prudent to omit, when "not" (for if you wont publish it, I must), will show that I am *not* an Atheist; I have publicly and long since repudiated Atheism as mere verbiage—the foolish offspring of an idiotic parent; that I do *not* preach "bold blasphemies," and am the constant enemy of those who do; that I do *not* compare myself with Socrates or the prophet of the Hebrews; that the omitted passages do *not* "consist chiefly of an extract from the writer's own work;" lastly, that I did *not*, in my letter, say anything to warrant the imputation of "grossest infidelity."

The judgment you have thought proper to deliver concerning my fitness to play the part of a "moral teacher" was at least uncalled for, and ill-natured remarks about "empty flippancy and affectation of wit" might well have been spared. Had I indulged in such impertinencies, every Christian reader of the *Constitutional* would have been shocked, and unhesitatingly ascribed them to want of faith in the mysteries of Christianity. As it is, however, they will see nothing in your offensive outpouring of the spirit but editorial zeal in the work of "squelching" unbelievers.

"Christians have burned each other, quite persuaded  
All the apostles would have done as they did."

Fortunately, reason and good sense so far prevail among us (thanks to Free-thinking and Freethinkers) that the zeal which formerly displayed itself in racks gibbets, and the fires of Smithfield, now assumes the shape of abuse, or, at worst, a "mock trial," followed by two or three years imprisonment. So terrible is the latitudinarianism of these "latter days," that Christians are not allowed to burn *Freethinkers*, much less each other. Were they potent as of yore, my case would, indeed, be an unfortunate one.

Do not imagine, Mr Editor, I shall "raise the cuckoo cry of intolerance" because you have "cut out the heart" of my defence, or because you object to my "empty flippancy and affectation of wit"—Calvin denounced Luther as "a dog and a great beast." Why, then, should you stick at trifles while dealing with me? If Luther spoke contemptuously of Calvin "the declaimer," and Calvin retorted (which he notoriously did) upon the "reckless" hero of the Reformation, by telling him that his whole school was "nothing but a stinking sty of pigs;" why, I demand again, should you be nice in denouncing those who have the audacity to think for themselves? To abuse and ridicule, you have a *carte blanche*. Go on, then, abusing and ridiculing to your heart's content, but disclaim subterfuge, or mean trickiness of any kind, and ape not the hero who provoked his neighbour to fight a duel, well knowing that his neighbour must fight—if he fought at all—with his hands tied behind his back. For the sake of that "common decency" you accuse me of outraging, take one of two courses—either abandon the field altogether, or allow me to enter it on equal terms.

There is no desire on my part to make the *Constitutional* "a conduit for conveying to the public a foul stream;" nor am I anxious to make your paper a medium for anything opposed "to the purity and well-being of society." But, if you make the *Constitutional* a medium of unscrupulous attacks upon me, my "dupes," or my cause; if it seem to you good and Christian-like, to make it a "conduit," through which frightened bigots and "reckless" vituperators can deluge the public with their "foul streams" of slander, I for one shall protest against and denounce you as unworthy to sit in judgment upon the conduct of Freethinkers.

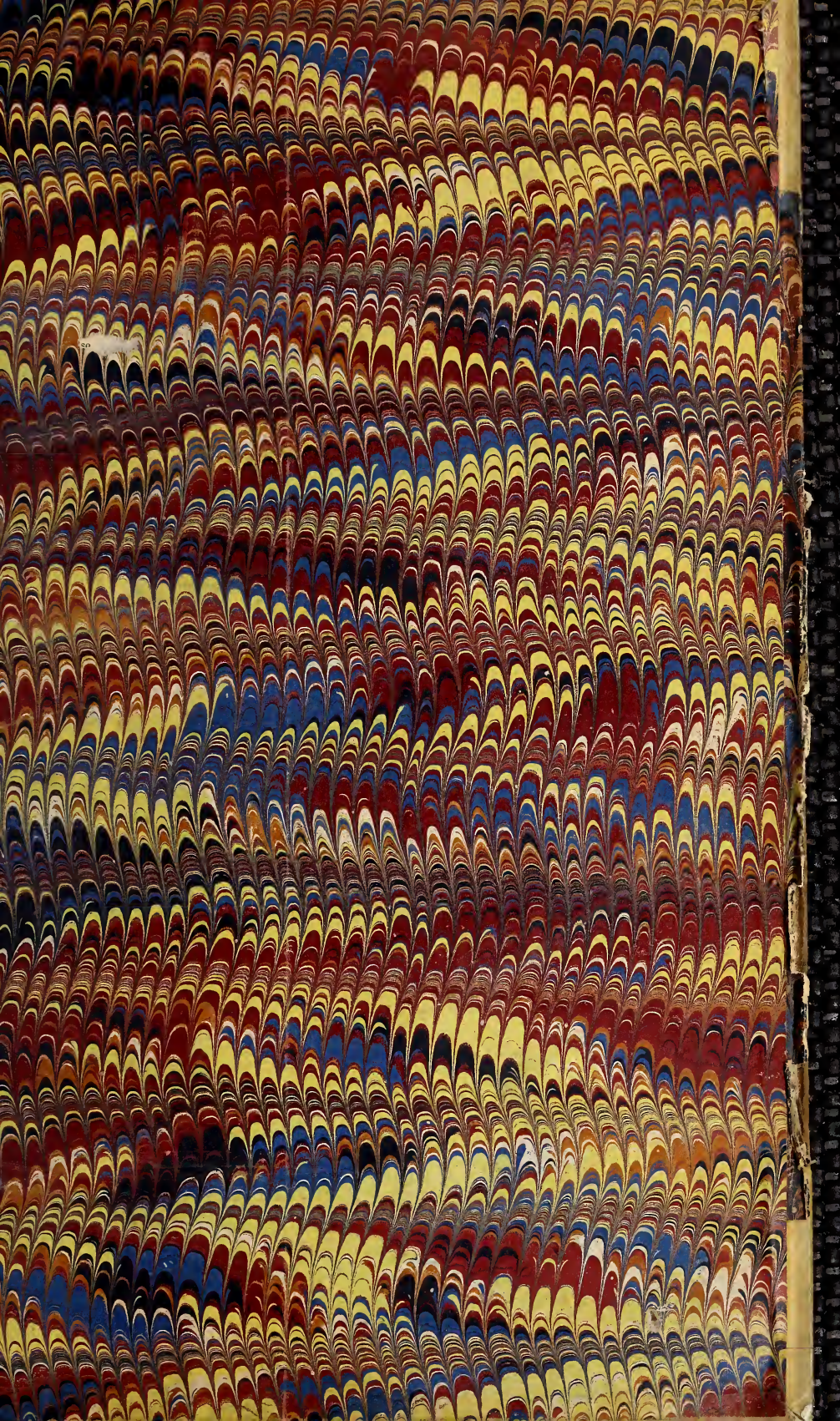
These statements are seriously made, but not in anger, or a malignant spirit. About you, personally, I know nothing, care nothing. But I do know something (care something, too) about myself, and choose not to allow my reputation wantonly to be blackened, or my opinions and aspirations wilfully misrepresented.

With due respect, yours, &c.,

CHARLES SOUTHWELL.

GLASGOW, 22d Jan., 1852.







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